



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

AUG 04 2016

The Honorable Christopher A. Hart
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Chairman Hart:

Thank you for your letter regarding the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) Safety Recommendations R-16-01 and R-16-02, which both arose from NTSB's investigation of the January 12, 2015, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), L'Enfant Plaza station electrical arcing and smoke accident. As you are aware, the FTA is working very closely on a daily basis with WMATA to improve the safety performance of the transit system. The two recommendations tasked to FTA are as follows:

NTSB Recommendation R-16-01:

Issue regulatory standards for tunnel infrastructure inspection, maintenance, and repair, incorporating applicable industry consensus standards into those standards.

NTSB Recommendation R-16-02:

Issue regulatory safety standards for emergency egress in tunnel environments.

As required by Section 3020 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), FTA is conducting a review of public transportation safety standards and protocols. On May 17, 2016, FTA published a *Federal Register* notice soliciting public comment on its Compendium of transit safety standards and protocols, which includes standards for tunnel infrastructure inspection, maintenance and repair, and emergency egress in smoke and fire incidents. The FTA sought comment from the public specifically on additional transit safety standards that were not reflected in the Compendium, data-driven evidence regarding the effectiveness of existing standards, specific areas where FTA should establish new minimum safety standards, safety standards from other industries that could be applied to the public transportation industry to reduce safety risks, and input on how to prioritize the establishment of new standards.

The public comment period ended on June 16, 2016, and FTA is currently reviewing the comments received. At the conclusion of its review, FTA will issue a public report on its findings, which will include recommendations regarding revising existing standards and issuing new standards.

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Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the NTSB's recommendation. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me directly at (202) 366-4040 or FTA's Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight, Thomas Littleton, PhD, at 202-366-1783.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Flowers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Flowers
Acting Administrator