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TERRORISM
ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND NONPROLIFERATION

November 5, 2021

Mr. Geoffrey A. Cherrington
Inspector General
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Cherrington:

I write to request that your office investigate an urgent matter related to the critical and potentially deadly safety issues with 7000 series Metro railcars.

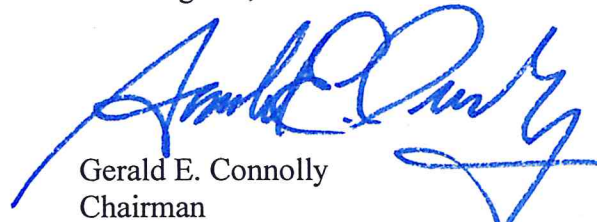
As you know, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is leading an investigation into the October 12 derailment of a 7000 series railcar. A preliminary investigation found that the cause of the derailment was the widening of the wheelset of the fourth axle on the railcar. A subsequent review discovered at least 21 additional defective wheelsets. It was further revealed that WMATA has been aware of this issue since 2017 and has failed to develop a solution in collaboration with the railcar manufacturer, Kawasaki.

WMATA also failed to share its knowledge of this safety defect with the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) despite bi-weekly meetings between the WMSC and the office of the Chief Mechanical Officer concerning all known safety issues with railcars. Unfortunately, this is part of a consistent pattern of resistance within WMATA to providing the WMSC with the information and access it requires to conduct safety oversight of the system.

For the purposes of transparency and oversight, I request that your office examine all matters related to WMATA withholding from the WMSC information related to the 7000 series railcar defect, and report same to the Subcommittee on Government Operations.

Thank you for your critical work to ensure a safe and reliable national capital area transit system and for your urgent attention to this request.

Best Regards,



Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman

Subcommittee on Government Operations