



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senate Passes Carlucci, Abinanti Rail Grade Crossing Safety Bill

DAVID CARLUCCI May 18, 2016



Albany, NY – (5-17-15) - Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) announced today that the State Senate has passed bill, [S.3458B](#), that would require the Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive statewide study of level grade rail crossings.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, a Metro North commuter train collided with an SUV at a highway-railroad grade crossing at the Commerce Street crossing in Valhalla. That crash, the deadliest in the railroad's history, killed 6 people and injured dozens more. In the aftermath of this tragedy, renewed focus was given to the safety of rail grade crossings throughout New York

State.

On Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, Senator Carlucci joined Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburg/Mt. Pleasant) and Alan Brody, husband of Valhalla crash victim Ellen Brody, at the site of last year's crash to call on the Senate to pass this bill.

With approximately 5,304 rail grade crossings throughout the state, this study is crucial to determine what safety improvements must be made in order to prevent future collisions.

Additionally, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has made rail grade crossing safety a top priority. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016, FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg sent a letter to state Departments of Transportation across the country asking that they "visit crossings in their region and monitor and test crossing signals and adjacent traffic signals to ensure the signals are synched and operating properly." Administrator Feinberg also emphasized the availability of federal assistance for states to improve rail grade crossing safety.

"In the aftermath of the Valhalla crash, many wondered what needed to be done to prevent another tragedy. With the passage of this bill, the Department of Transportation now has the tools to undertake a comprehensive study of rail grade crossings throughout the state to ensure problem crossings are improved or, if necessary, removed. The safety of motorists will remain a top priority of mine and I commend the efforts of many throughout the community, including Alan Brody, for making their voices heard," **said Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester).**

"I applaud Senator Carlucci for shepherding this common sense legislation through the Senate – his advocacy is invaluable. The Assembly and Senate have recognized the importance of having experts evaluate the state's rail crossings. I expect that the Governor will continue prioritizing safer rail crossings by immediately signing this legislation. It would be a shame if these efforts were delayed," **said Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh/Mt.**

**Pleasant).**

The Assembly passed the bill in March. The bill now heads to the Governor's office to await further action.