



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy sponsors railroad law requiring joint inspection of traffic signals

TERRENCE MURPHY May 6, 2016



ALBANY, NY – In light of the near-disaster at the Green Street crossing in Bedford, and with the memory of the tragic 2015 Metro-North train accident in Valhalla still fresh in our memories, Senator Terrence Murphy is sponsoring a bill requiring the joint inspection of traffic signals at interconnected grade crossings.

“We put our trust in Metro-North and the Department of Transportation on a daily basis to protect commuters and drivers crossing the railways,” said Senator Murphy. “Currently,

Metro-North and the DOT are working independently to try and keep our railroad grade crossings safe, but one hand does not know what the other hand is doing. A coordinated program of inspections will significantly improve safety at our railway crossings.”

Even before the Metro-North commuter train crash in Valhalla that claimed the lives of six people, Senator Murphy was a proponent for increased railway safety. Following the accident, Senator Murphy lead a coalition calling for expedited grade crossing assessments and co-authored, S5238, a bill calling for the installation of cameras at railway crossings that would monitor crossing violations. The new legislation adds a new section to the railroad law which would establish a required joint inspection by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) every two years.

“We need to get this bill passed as quickly as possible in order to avoid future incidents that put passengers and drivers in danger,” said County Legislator Francis Corcoran. “Having the MTA and DOT work together is a logical and efficient way to ensure inspections are conducted regularly. The passage of Senator Murphy’s bill will ultimately save lives.”

“I support Senator Murphy’s efforts in coordinating the inspections of grade crossings with the MTA and the DOT,” said Mt. Pleasant Town Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi. “It makes total sense that the two entities directly effecting traffic flow at these intersections be on the same page .Any action that would ensure the safe passage of vehicles through railway crossings would be very much appreciated by the Town of Mount Pleasant.”

As a result of Senator Murphy’s efforts, and with a recommendation from the National Transportation Board (NTSB), a statewide effort was launched to improve the coordinated operation of traffic and railroad signal systems that are in close proximity to where vehicles line up to cross the tracks.

Under the current system the railroads independently inspect their portion of the interconnected system and the Department of Transportation does the same for signals on the state system. However, the majority of these signals are located on the local system, and it is not known how often these interconnected signals are being inspected.

“Anything we can do to increase railroad safety crossing is a very good thing,” said New Castle Town Supervisor Robert Greenstein. “The cooperation with the Federal Government is also very encouraging. That cooperation will certainly be needed as we work to eliminate on-grade railroad crossings.”

Richard Williams Sr., Patterson Town Supervisor, added, “I applaud Senator Murphy for looking to improve the safety of our rail crossings, consolidate services wherever it is possible, and working hard to save New Yorker’s tax dollars by reducing the duplication of services.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S5238A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly

- On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Authorizes local authorities to establish owner liability for failure of an operator of a motor vehicle to obey a signal indicating the approach of a train

May 08, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Terrence Murphy

Do you support this bill?