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Joe Courtney  
Congress of the United States

2nd District, Connecticut

June 13, 2008

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Mr. Alexander K. Kummant  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation)  
60 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Kummant:

As we discussed during our phone conversation today, I am deeply concerned about what the latest delay in the Thames River bridge replacement project means for southeastern Connecticut and again urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to take immediate steps to address these delays and move the project forward.

Over the past several weeks, a wide range of local stakeholders, including small businesses, boaters, the Navy, the Coast Guard and others, have made good faith efforts to work around the rail bridge replacement project. Although inconvenient, all involved know how important the replacement of the 90-year old bridge is to the reliability and safety of the rail system in our region. Every step of the way, both Amtrak and the contractor responsible for the project assured my office and the community that every measure was being taken to limit the impact of the channel closure and planned for possible problems that could arise during the work.

That is why today's announcement, that work on the bridge is being suspended until a alternate plan for the removal of the rail span can be developed, is so troubling. It is my understanding that the plan for addressing this latest problem will not be put in place until Monday at the latest, raising significant uncertainty as to when the replacement will actually take place and normal maritime traffic on the river can be resumed. While normal rail service will continue, maritime traffic for vessels requiring more than a 30-foot clearance will be prohibited while the bridge remains in its lowered position.

**I cannot underscore enough the implications that indefinite delays will have on the region and the urgent need to ensure the timely completion of this project.** To this end, I ask that Amtrak and the contractors involved take immediate steps to develop an alternate plan to address problems with the counterweight and solidify the new schedule for the project so that all those affected by this new delay can plan accordingly. In addition, as you develop these plans, I urge you to utilize any and all available resources to bring this issue to a quick resolution. Waiting until Monday to develop and announce these plans will only unnecessarily prolong the delay and leave many in the region waiting in a frustrating and costly limbo.

I appreciate your urgent attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly to discuss this request.

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress