

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 18, 2023

Mr. Alan H. Shaw  
Chief Executive Office  
Norfolk Southern Railway  
650 W. Peachtree Street NW,  
Atlanta, GA 30308

Dear Mr. Shaw:

We request your attention to several railroad safety concerns in the City of Binghamton, New York, which involve a number of bridges owned and operated by your company, Norfolk Southern Railway. A recent inspection commissioned by the City of all railroad bridges located within Binghamton found an alarming number of the bridges to be in troubling condition, including potential structural or safety concerns involving several of Norfolk Southern Railroad's bridges. Similarly, it is our understanding that Norfolk Southern has conducted its own separate inspection with competing findings — please share those reports with the City. In light of these reports and your responsibility to the community, we request that you meet with the City to discuss both reports and act promptly to address any concerns the community may have.


The City of Binghamton recently hired an independent engineering firm to survey the twenty-five bridges — owned by either your railroad or the New York Susquehanna & Western Corporation — found within the City. The independent inspections, which began in June 2023, were visual safety inspections focused on identifying any signs of distress “that may indicate serious safety and/or structural concerns”. The visual inspections found twelve bridges owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railroad to be in severe or poor condition indicating either a structural or safety concern that requires further investigation subsequent action by Norfolk Southern.<sup>1</sup>

While the City has made this independent bridge safety report readily available to the public, we understand that Norfolk Southern Railway has led its own inspection, but those official findings have not yet been shared with the community. Please share your findings with City immediately and meet with local leadership to discuss the reports and talk through any concerns.

The findings highlighted by the City's report are troubling to us, and have led us to call on the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to conduct its own independent, federal audit and inspection of Binghamton's railroad bridges. If these visual concerns detailed in the City's report are indeed indicative of larger structural or safety issues, it is Norfolk Southern's duty to act swiftly to protect the community. We look forward to hearing how you plan to work with the City to address any matters of safety and call on you to fully cooperate with any related FRA inquiries.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,

  
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

<sup>1</sup> <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.binghamton-ny.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/9704>