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ICYMI: "Let's be clear that the financing status of the TTF has nothing to do with today's incident."

Friday, September 30, 2016

Tags: [Other](#)*In Case You Missed It***"Let's be clear that the financing status of the TTF has nothing to do with today's incident."****- Commissioner Richard T. Hammer**

Irresponsible to suggest funding caused Hoboken tragedy

New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner Richard T. Hammer

Star-Ledger

The NJ Transit rail accident at Hoboken Station was tragic and unexpected. Our hearts and prayers go out to the family of Fabiola Bittar de Kroon who lost her life and to those who were injured.

One thing we need to make clear for the public and NJ Transit customers is that the safety of our passengers is our No. 1 priority.

It is also important to note that, while this tragedy remains under investigation, it is irresponsible for anyone to suggest possible causes, let alone suggest safety-related or routine maintenance projects at the station or approaching the station were affected by the shutdown of Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) financing.

A column in The Star-Ledger seemed to do just that by erroneously suggesting the TTF shutdown that went into effect in July delayed the installation of Positive Train Control (PTC), a safety system being installed throughout the nation.

Let's be clear that the financing status of the TTF has nothing to do with today's incident. No safety or routine maintenance projects at Hoboken were stalled due to the TTF impasse.

The TTF had been funded at \$3.2 billion per year, with 50 percent state funding and 50 percent federal funding, since 2010 and right through this past June. The executive order restricting the use of the fund only for projects deemed necessary to the health and safety of the public did not go into effect until three months ago.

PTC installation was one of the projects exempt from the freeze of TTF funds and NJ Transit continues to advance its PTC installation in order to meet the 2018 federal deadline for completion of the system. Yet, there is nothing to suggest at this stage that PTC would or could have prevented this tragedy.

As Gov. Chris Christie said in Hoboken, at this early stage we must await results of the investigation and let those facts guide our conclusions and our efforts to continue to improve safety in the future.

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