

Letters To Editor. As seen in Palm Beach Post, Dec 3 2019

Florida House and Senate must make FEC corridor safer

We, at the Alliance for Safe Trains, are pleased to see your editorial on the need for safety equipment at the CSX crossing where a tragic accident occurred. ([“Gates, lights needed at rural Florida railroad crossings, too,”](#) Sunday)

However, we are just as concerned about the 55 rail deaths this year across the state and what can be done to save lives.

Palm Beach County had its share – 18 rail deaths, including nine of the 29 Brightline related deaths in 2019. Because of the dense population along the coast requiring hundreds of crossings, the FEC corridor with high speed passenger and freight trains is the deadliest in the country (by track miles traveled).

The state legislature’s 2018 independent study findings include the need for more fencing and pedestrian bridges and barriers along the tracks between crossings. Amtrak’s route from Baltimore to Washington, for instance, has no grade crossings and is completely fenced.

There’s an old saying, “Railroad regulations are written in blood,” because corporations control the regulators and fight additional costs. We ask: How much more blood must be shed before the FEC corridor is made safer?

New rail safety legislation has been proposed this coming session in Florida’s House and Senate. Tell your representatives they must pass the legislation.

Susan Mehiel, Vero Beach

Editor’s note: Mehiel is director of Alliance for Safe Trains.