



August 16, 2012

Legislation

Congressional Schedule. Congress is currently not in session due to the August recess and upcoming Republican and Democratic National Conventions. Congress will reconvene on Monday, September 10.

Mica prevails in member vs. member primary. Congressman John Mica (R-FL), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, easily beat freshman Congresswoman Sandy Adams (R-FL) in a member vs. member Florida Republican primary on Tuesday.

With all precincts reporting, Mica led Adams 61 percent to 39 percent. The two incumbents had been drawn into the same district by redistricting. Although one of them could have decided to run for an open seat in an adjacent district, both decided to challenge one another.

Mica is expected to easily win the general election against Democrat Jason Kendall in the Republican leaning district.

Administration

FRA predicts partial, not complete, PTC implementation by end of 2015. In a recent status report to Congress, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) predicts that only partial implementation of positive train control (PTC) will be achieved by December 31, 2015.

Positive train control refers to train control technology that is designed to prevent train-to-train collisions and overspeed derailments. The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 mandates that PTC be implemented across a significant portion of the nation's rail network by December 31, 2015. Lines requiring PTC are primarily Class I railroad main lines that handle any toxic inhalation hazardous materials, and any lines over which regular, intercity passenger services occur. PTC is ultimately expected to be instituted on approximately 70,000 miles of railroad track.

In its report, the FRA cites that both freight and passenger railroads are encountering "significant technical and programmatic issues" that will impede full implementation of PTC by the established deadline.

The report states, "Although the initial PTC Implementation Plans submitted by the applicable railroads to the FRA for approval stated they would complete implementation by the 2015 deadline, all of the plans were based on the assumption that there would be no technical or programmatic issues in the

design, development, integration, deployment and testing of the PTC systems they adopted. Given the current state of development and availability of the required hardware and software, along with deployment considerations, most railroads will likely not be able to complete full Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008-required implementation of PTC by December 31, 2015.”

The FRA predicts that partial implementation of PTC can be achieved by the deadline. The agency also recommends that it be permitted to approve alternative safety technologies on particular line segments if such a request from a railroad is “appropriately and properly justified.”