



## California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CPUC PRESIDENT RESPONDS TO METROLINK ACCIDENT**

***AS PRINCIPAL STATE AGENCY FOR RAIL SAFETY, CPUC TO CONSIDER BANNING  
PERSONAL CELLULAR DEVICE USE BY TRAIN OPERATORS;  
CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL TRAIN SAFETY MEASURES***

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 15, 2008 - In response to Friday's Metrolink accident, Michael R. Peevey, President of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), today said he will propose an emergency order banning the personal use of cellular communication devices while operating a train, and will call on the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to institute additional train control safety measures.

"On behalf of the CPUC, I would like to express our condolences to the family and friends of those involved in the Metrolink accident," said President Peevey. "The CPUC is the principal state agency for rail safety and we are leaving no stone unturned in our investigation of this accident, including interviewing the former spokesperson for Metrolink who resigned from the agency, allegedly after her candor in assessing responsibility for the accident was questioned by her superiors. Further, I will ask my fellow Commissioners on Thursday to approve an emergency order prohibiting the personal use of cellular communication devices while operating a freight or passenger train anywhere in California. Some railroad operators may have policies prohibiting the personal use of such devices, but they're widely ignored. Our order would make it the law and we'll go after violators. We owe it to the public."

President Peevey said that he will ask the FRA to require Automatic Train Stop (ATS) systems immediately on all freight and passenger trains that share tracks in California. ATS ensures that trains automatically stop at red signals, thereby avoiding collisions with other trains. "I will also urge



the FRA to approve the implementation of Positive Train Control, a more complex form of automated train control. These safety measures are especially important in Southern California, which has a very high number of commuter trains that share tracks with freight trains,” said President Peevey.

The CPUC has 10 experts on rail safety dedicated to the Metrolink accident investigation, and is working closely with the FRA and the National Transportation Safety Board staff assigned to the investigation. The CPUC’s experts have extensive knowledge in railroad operations, track, railroad equipment, and signal and train control systems.

As the principal state agency for rail safety, the CPUC has broad authority to issue safety orders or regulations governing rail carriers in California, including Metrolink, Union Pacific, and other railroads and rail transit agencies. The CPUC shares this authority with federal agencies, and enforces federal regulations through the formal federal-state participation program.

The emergency order prohibiting the personal use of cellular communication devices while operating a train in California will be presented to the full CPUC for a vote this Thursday, September 18.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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