



For Immediate Release

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**All Aboard Florida/Brightline's Risks Becoming a Reality:
Three Pedestrians Killed Before Service Even Begins**

~Deaths highlight need for High Speed Rail Safety Measures Now~

Treasure Coast Region, FL – The deaths of three women in three separate incidents, in which they were stuck by AAF/Brightline High Speed Trains between July 2017 and last Friday, January 12, 2018, clearly demonstrate the urgent need to reconsider the safety measures that will be necessary to protect pedestrians and motorists across Florida.

Between 2011 and 2017, data collected by the [U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Rail Administration](#) shows that there have been a total of 105 deaths, over 350 miles of Florida East Coast Railway tracks. With the AAF/Brightline deaths, that number is now at least 108.

Citizens Against Rail Expansion in Florida (CARE FL), along with Martin County and Indian River County, have continued to express concerns about inadequate safety measures in place along the rail corridor where there are approximately 350 at grade crossings. The most recent death reportedly involved a 32-year-old woman, Melissa Lavell, who was ducking under a guard rail when she was struck and killed by the Brightline train that was making its inaugural trip with VIP passengers. The women killed in the earlier incidents were 35-year-old Jennifer Reed and a teenager whose name was not reported.

“First and foremost, we express our deepest condolences to the family members of all three victims,” said Brent Hanlon, Chairman of CARE FL. “This is exactly why we are fighting for our communities. Enough is enough. We need safety measures in place that will protect our pedestrians, our school children who may walk or bike along the tracks to school, our first responders and members of our community. AAF continues to tout its commitment to safety, but three deaths during test runs indicate something is seriously wrong.”

“How many more deaths or injuries will it take before AAF acknowledges the need for enhanced safety measures?” added Hanlon.

In December 2017, an Amtrak train making its inaugural trip in Washington State derailed, killing at least 3 people and injuring about 100. Speed was a factor which is why AAF’s high-speed passenger train gives us pause in Florida where it is expected to exceed 110 miles per hour as it transports passengers across the state.

And this is why CARE FL is supporting two very important bills that have been filed for the 2018 Legislative Session. Sen. Debbie Mayfield has once again filed her High Speed Passenger Rail Safety bill [SB 572](#) that would require protections be put in place to prevent similar accidents from taking place. The bill would also ensure that affected counties would not be held responsible for the costs of the safety upgrades.

Representatives Erin Grall and Mary Lynn Magar have also filed a similar bill [HB 525](#) that would address the cost of upgrades.

We stand with our local elected leaders of Martin County and Indian River County who, along with CARE FL members, have continued to fight to protect the safety and well-being of our residents.

CARE FL plans to host an informational meeting on Monday, January 29 at the Lyric Theatre in downtown Stuart. The meeting will give CARE FL an opportunity to provide community members with new information and to answer any questions they may have about the ill-conceived rail project.

The meeting is scheduled to kick-off at 7 p.m. and will feature the following speakers:

- Brent Hanlon, Chairman of the CARE FL Steering Committee,
- Steve Ryan, McDermott, Will & Emery, CARE FL attorney,
- Bob Crandall, CARE FL Steering Committee member and former CEO of American Airlines.

For more information please visit CARE FL’s site at www.saveourfl.com or our [Facebook page](#).

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