



A Memo from the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

October 10, 2025

YAC Statement on Silverliner IV Emergency Order

The SEPTA YAC is troubled to see regular Regional Rail operations impacted by the recent FRA Emergency Order pertaining to the Silverliner IV cars. Safety should always be the number one priority of any transit agency, and federal intervention should not be required to ensure this.

This crisis continues to show the dangers of using capital project money to fund day-to-day operations. The Pennsylvania State Legislature needs to provide SEPTA with a dedicated source of operations funding so the agency can use capital dollars for capital projects. The recent budget band-aid to use over \$400 million of capital money for operations impedes SEPTA's ability to rehabilitate and replace aging equipment and infrastructure. The Silverliner IV's sister cars, NJT's Arrow III's, were fully overhauled with new electronic systems in the 1990s. SEPTA never received nor allocated funding to overhaul the Silverliner IV's, and today we are paying the price for those shortcomings.

While a years-long funding crisis hasn't helped, the risk of running the specific troublesome trainsets has been well known. NTSB reports crews and dispatchers being aware of slow accelerations of the specific trainsets, indicative of brake resistor issues. Furthermore, as this safety audit goes on, there seems to be a lack of availability of the Silverliner V fleet to maintain service.

Going forward, SEPTA must undertake measures to preserve reliable long-term Regional Rail service. The YAC strongly recommends SEPTA to consider:

- Exploring short-term railcar leases to provide flexibility while the Silverliner IV fleet is inspected.
- Train more crews to operate push-pull trainsets outside of rush-hour express runs. Push-pull trains have significant capacity that is desperately needed with the loss of a large portion of the IV fleet.
- Prioritizing procurement of the Silverliner VI railcars. SEPTA should strongly consider adapting proven "off-the-shelf" railcar models, such as the Alstom Multilevel III's or Stadler FLIRT's. SEPTA must ensure they do not repeat the failures of the CRRC bi-level coach project, while also ensuring they can procure cars at a reasonable cost.