



RSA Media Statement

MBTA Board approval of CRRC contract: The worst is still to come

Attributable to [Rail Security Alliance](#) Executive Director Erik Olson:

“The MBTA Board approval of an updated contract with Chinese Communist owned CRRC smells terrible.

CRRC won the original procurement bid in 2014 because it came in \$200 million lower than MBTA’s own estimate for the project and \$514 million below the highest bidder. Now, ten years later, MBTA will pay CRRC \$148 million more to finish a contract that is already behind schedule and full of quality and safety issues.

The Board also voted to forfeit up to \$130.6 million in penalties if CRRC can deliver the cars by the new agreed upon date in 2027. Good luck with that.

The MBTA Board said it themselves during its March 28 meeting in statements including: ‘It’s unfortunate that we’re in this position” and “I think we just have to hold our nose and approve the reset’.

By holding their nose, they admit that CRRC will move railcar assembly that has been happening at its Springfield, Mass. plant to China. That includes things like wiring and electrical components. How many jobs will be lost? And what does that do to “Build America” provisions already in place?

Robert Butler, MBTA’s union representative on the Board, pointed out another problem with CRRC: Passenger railcar shells that are made in China have to be “reworked” by MBTA in Springfield because they’re not made correctly.

Time and time again during this meeting, MBTA officials made it clear: CRRC has not fulfilled its original contract. CRRC is also [unreliable and unsafe](#). It has a [long history](#) of battery explosions, train derailments, loose brake bolts, and electrical arcing.

It’s a foreign entity that has gotten the attention of the U.S. Defense Department for its [ties](#) to the Chinese military. It’s been reported to use forced [Uyghur](#) and [child labor](#) in its supply chains, and it’s been everything except transparent in the years since CRRC won that first bid.

MBTA seems to know all this. Instead of cutting their losses, they’re doubling down.

The sad thing is the worst is still to come.



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