# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, Department of transportation

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | To ensure a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Overview | The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) administrator represents the department and advises the secretary on all railroad activities. The administrator serves as the principal point of contact between the Department of Transportation and other public and private interests in rail transportation matters including the development of a high-speed intercity passenger rail program.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Transportation (49 U.S.C. § 103) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2015, FRA had an actual budget of $1,626 million and 842 full-time equivalents.[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Carries out duties and powers related to railroad safety, policy and development * Carries out other duties and powers prescribed by the secretary * Provides assistance to states in developing state rail plans * Develops a long-range national rail plan that is consistent with approved state rail plans and the nation’s rail needs, as determined by the secretary, to promote an integrated, cohesive, efficient and optimized national rail system for the movement of goods and people (49 U.S.C. § 103) * Oversees FRA’s operations * Manages a comprehensive railroad safety assurance program and regulatory initiatives * Enforces railroad safety laws and regulations * Develops and implements national freight and passenger rail policy and financial assistance programs, including the high-speed rail program * Oversees wide-ranging advanced research and development projects in support of improved railroad safety[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Professional experience in railroad safety, hazardous materials safety or other transportation safety (49 U.S.C. § 103) * Relationships with relevant stakeholders, or ability to form them * Prior government experience (helpful) * Strong management experience |
| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Excellent leadership skills * Negotiation skills |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Sarah Elizabeth Feinberg (2015 to 2016): Chief of Staff to Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox; Director of Corporate and Strategic Communications, Facebook; Director of Communications and Business Strategy, Bloomberg[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Joseph C. Szabo (2009 to 2015): Alternate National Legislative Director, United Transportation Union; Vice President of the Illinois AFL-CIO; Illinois legislative Director, United Transportation Union[[7]](#endnote-7) | |
| Joseph H. Boardman (2005 to 2008): Transportation Commissioner, New York State, Department of Transportation; Owner of a transportation management company[[8]](#endnote-8) | |

1. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/mission/about-us [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.fra.dot.gov/conference/trespass2012/pdf/Bios/Opening%20Session/Joseph%20C%20Szabo%20-%20Bio.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Partnership for Public Service analysis of Fedscope [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.fra.dot.gov/conference/trespass2012/pdf/Bios/Opening%20Session/Joseph%20C%20Szabo%20-%20Bio.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.allgov.com/news/appointments-and-resignations/administrator-of-the-federal-railroad-administration-who-is-sarah-feinberg-151003?news=857557 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.allgov.com/news/appointments-and-resignations/federal-railroad-administrator-who-is-joe-szabo?news=838987 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.nexis.com/auth/checkbrowser.do?t=1485447695916&bhcp=1 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)