

DANA M. STEIN
Legislative District 11B
Baltimore County

SPEAKER PRO TEM

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Environment

Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 301
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3527 • 301-858-3527
800-492-7122 Ext. 3527
Dana.Stein@house.state.md.us

The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Delegate Dana Stein's Testimony in Support of
HB 958 - "The Maryland Railroad Safety Act of 2025"**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Railway Safety Act is a proactive safety bill that has several provisions that will make Maryland's railways and communities much safer.

Nationwide in 2024, there were 2,045 collisions at highway-rail crossings, resulting in 252 fatalities and 653 injuries.¹ In 2024, there were over 26,000 reports of trains blocking highway-rail crossings—sometimes for hours at a time. In 24% of these incidents, first responders—including ambulances heading to hospitals—were unable to get through. In 27% of these incidents, pedestrians were observed climbing on, over, and even under the stopped train to cross to the other side of the blocked tracks. Unfortunately, some of these cross-throughs resulted in limbs being severed or lives lost.²

In other words, in the last year alone, there were nearly 13,000 reported cases of a life either at risk of not being saved or a life being risked because a train was blocking a highway-rail crossing. Two provisions of this bill would go far in mitigating these issues: one prohibits a train from blocking rail crossings for more than 5 minutes, and the second limits train length to 8,500 feet—which is about 1.6 miles.

The East Palestine train derailment in 2023 serves as a powerful reminder as to why rail safety needs to be taken very seriously. That derailment was

¹ Operation LifeSaver, Rail Safety Education. [Collisions & Casualties by Year | Operation Lifesaver](#)

² U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, "Blocked Crossing Data," 2024. [Blocked Crossings](#)

caused by an overheated wheel bearing that was not detected by the equipment then in use. A provision in this bill that requires wayside detector systems be installed, operated, and maintained according to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) guidelines would have prevented that derailment from happening.

First responders who bravely fought the ensuing fire after that derailment were not wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) because they initially did not know that the train was hauling dangerous, hazardous material. The reporting system provision of this bill would ensure that our first responders are properly prepared for such an incident here in Maryland.

The two-person crew requirement language is very similar to the bills this committee and the House passed on five different occasions: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2023.

The cities of Cumberland and Baltimore as well as the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince Georges have recently passed resolutions of support urging the General Assembly to pass this bill. I have included those resolutions for your review.

This committee has supported rail safety many times in the past. I ask that it do so again. I urge this committee for a favorable report!

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 24-0234R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Porter, Bullock, Middleton, Dorsey, Burnett, Conway, Ramos,
Stokes, Glover, and Cohen
Introduced and adopted: November 4, 2024

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Request for State Action – Maryland Railway Safety Act

FOR the purpose of supporting the introduction, passage, and enrollment of the Maryland
Railway Safety Act.

Recitals

WHEREAS, the safe operation of freight and passenger trains is vital to commerce, and the
Baltimore City Council supports efforts to keep train operations safe in the City of Baltimore and
throughout the State.

WHEREAS, in recent years, several catastrophic train wrecks have occurred across the
country, many of which involved hazardous materials.

WHEREAS, according to the Federal Railroad Administration's statistics, there have been
over 2,000 rail crossing accidents per year over the last decade, causing 8,494 injuries and 2,503
deaths.

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act would address many unsafe conditions existing
in the railroad industry today and is vital to ensuring safe train operations.

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will prohibit railroads from blocking road
crossings for extended periods of time, limit the length of freight and work trains, and require
safe staffing levels for trains.

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will:

- allow designated collective bargaining representatives to monitor railroad safety
practices and operations;
- require the certification that safety wayside detector systems on railroad tracks are
functional;
- require a reporting system for transportation of hazardous materials or waste
accessible only to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the State's
Emergency Management Agency, and County and City Emergency Management
Agencies.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

Council Bill 24-0234R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the
2 Baltimore City Council supports the introduction, passage, and enrollment of the Maryland
3 Railway Safety Act.

4 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor of
5 Maryland, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Speaker of the Maryland House of
6 Delegates, the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly,
7 the Director of the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Director of the Baltimore City
8 Department of Transportation, the Director of the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, and the
9 Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Legislative Session 2024, Legislative Day No. 17

Resolution No. 38-24

Introduced by Ms. Pickard, Ms. Rodvien, Ms. Hummer, and Mr. Smith

By the County Council, September 16, 2024

1 RESOLUTION supporting the passage and enrollment of the Maryland Railway Safety
2 Act

3
4 WHEREAS, the safe operation of freight and passenger trains are vital to
5 commerce; and Anne Arundel County Council supports efforts to keep train
6 operations safe in the county of Anne Arundel and throughout the State; and
7

8 WHEREAS, in recent years, several catastrophic train wrecks have occurred across
9 the country wreaking havoc on the communities in which they operated. Many of
10 those involving hazardous materials; and
11

12 WHEREAS, according to the Federal Railroad Administration's statistics, there
13 have been over 2,000 rail crossing accidents per year over the last decade causing
14 8,494 injuries and 2,503 deaths; and
15

16 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act would address many of these unsafe
17 conditions existing in the railroad industry today and is vital to ensuring safe train
18 operations; and
19

20 WHEREAS, The Maryland Railway Safety Act will prohibit railroads from
21 blocking road crossings for extended periods of time; and
22

23 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will limit the length of freight and
24 work trains; and
25

26 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act allow designated collective
27 bargaining representatives to monitor safety practices and operations; and
28

29 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require safe staffing levels for
30 trains and light engines; and
31

32 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require the certification that
33 safety wayside detector systems are located and functional on railroad tracks; and
34

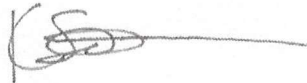
35 WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require a reporting system for
36 transportation of hazardous materials or waste accessible only to the Federal
37 Emergency Management Agency, the State's Emergency Management Agency,
38 and County and City Emergency Management Agencies; now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the County Council of Anne Arundel County, Maryland,* that it supports
2 the passage and enrollment of the Maryland Railway Safety Act; and be it further
3

4 *Resolved,* that a copy of this Resolution be sent to County Executive Steuart Pittman,
5 Maryland Governor Wes Moore, Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson, Maryland
6 House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, Anne Arundel Delegation Senate Chair Dawn D. Gile,
7 and Anne Arundel Delegation House Chair Heather A. Bagnall.

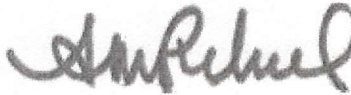
READ AND PASSED this 7th day of October, 2024.

By Order:



Kaley Schultze
Administrative Officer

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT RESOLUTION NO. 38-24 IS TRUE AND CORRECT AND DULY
ADOPTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY.



Allison Pickard
Chair



Jolene Ivey
Chair
Council District 5

"Serving the People of Prince George's County!"

October 22, 2024

Honorable William Ferguson IV
Senate President
State House -H107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
State House – H -101
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support for Maryland Railway Safety Act

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

The Prince George's County Council strongly supports the passage of the Maryland Railway Safety Act. As our state and county continue to grow, so does the importance of ensuring the safety of our rail systems for passenger and freight trains. Recently, several devastating train accidents have occurred across the country, injuring families and sometimes discharging hazardous materials throughout communities. This legislation is a first step to ensure the safe passage of freight and passenger trains throughout Prince George's County.

The Maryland Railway Safety Act addresses many critical issues throughout the railroad industry, such as enhanced safety protocols, increased staffing for train and light engines, and updated technology systems. Investing in our state railway systems significantly reduces the risk of accidents and improves the overall reliability of rail services.

The Prince George's County Council would like to thank our state leaders for their commitment to improving the lives of all residents in Prince George's County. For the reasons mentioned above, we support the passage of the Maryland Railway Safety Act. We look forward to Maryland being a leader in railway safety.

Regards,

Jolene Ivey, Chairwoman
Prince George's County Council

CC: Prince George's County Senate Delegation Members
Prince George's County House Delegation Members
Prince George's County Council Members

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2024, Legislative Day No. 23

Resolution No. 50-24

Councilmembers Jones, Crandell, Marks & Ertel

By the County Council, December 16, 2024

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council encouraging and supporting the passage of the Maryland Railway Safety Act by the Maryland General Assembly.

WHEREAS, the safe operation of freight and passenger trains are vital to commerce; and

WHEREAS, the County Council supports efforts to keep train operations safe in Baltimore County and throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, several catastrophic train wrecks have occurred across the country wreaking havoc on the communities in which they operated, many of which have involved hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, according information published by the Federal Railroad Administration, there have been over 2,000 rail crossing accidents per year over the last decade causing 8,494 injuries and 2,503 deaths; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act would address many of these unsafe conditions existing in the railroad industry today and is vital to ensuring safe train operations; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act would prohibit railroads from blocking road crossings for extended periods of time; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act would limit the length of freight and work trains; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act allow designated collective bargaining representatives to monitor safety practices and operations; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require safe staffing levels for trains and light engines; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require the certification that safety wayside detector systems are located and functional on railroad tracks; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Railway Safety Act will require a reporting system for transportation of hazardous materials or waste accessible only to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the State's Emergency Management Agency, and local Emergency Management Agencies; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Baltimore County Council encourages the Maryland General Assembly to pass the Maryland Railway Safety Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Governor of Maryland; the Baltimore County delegation to the Maryland General Assembly; and the Baltimore County Executive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect from the date of its passage by the County Council.