

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing support for the designation of the week of September 23 through September 29, 2024, as “Rail Safety Week” and supporting the goals and ideals of Rail Safety Week to reduce highway-rail grade crossing and trespasser-related incidents, fatalities, injuries, and derailments, improve the safe transportation of hazardous materials by rail, and prevent rail worker fatalities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. CANTWELL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of the week of September 23 through September 29, 2024, as “Rail Safety Week” and supporting the goals and ideals of Rail Safety Week to reduce highway-rail grade crossing and trespasser-related incidents, fatalities, injuries, and derailments, improve the safe transportation of hazardous materials by rail, and prevent rail worker fatalities.

Whereas the first Rail Safety Week was held from September 24 through September 30, 2017, by a highway-rail grade crossing safety nonprofit organization Operation Lifesaver, the Department of Transportation, and other organizations;

Whereas Rail Safety Week was launched to—

(1) raise awareness about the need for increased education on how to be safe around highway-rail grade crossings and railroad tracks; and

(2) highlight efforts to further reduce collisions, injuries, and fatalities;

Whereas highway-rail grade crossing and trespassing incidents constituted approximately 96 percent of all rail-related fatalities during 2023;

Whereas, under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117–58; 135 Stat. 429), Congress provided \$3,000,000,000 during a 5-year period for the Railroad Crossing Elimination grant program that has provided nearly \$600,000,000 to 63 local communities in 32 states to construct and plan highway-rail grade separation projects to eliminate crossings;

Whereas, in 2022, more than 60 percent of all highway-rail grade crossing collisions occurred at highway-rail grade crossings with lights or gates;

Whereas preliminary Federal statistics indicate that 2,192 highway-rail grade crossing collisions occurred in the United States in 2023, resulting in 247 deaths and another 764 individuals being injured;

Whereas many collisions between trains and motor vehicles or pedestrians could have been prevented by increased education, engineering, and enforcement;

Whereas Operation Lifesaver administers a public education program about grade-crossing safety and trespassing prevention;

Whereas, during Rail Safety Week, from September 23 through 29, 2024, and throughout the year, everyone is

encouraged to take added caution as motorists or pedestrians approach tracks or trains;

Whereas the February 3, 2023, Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, which resulted in the burning of 5 vinyl chloride tank cars and forced the evacuation of approximately 2,000 nearby residents, was a reminder of the risks posed by hazardous materials transportation;

Whereas preliminary 2023 Federal statistics indicate that—

(1) Class I freight railroads had the highest accident rate not at grade crossings in the past decade;

(2) the number of accidents not at grade crossings per 1,000,000 miles traveled among Class I freight railroads has increased by 42 percent since 2013; and

(3) more than 42,000 rail workers have been injured and 120 rail workers have been killed on duty since 2013;

Whereas the United States, Canada, and Mexico will concurrently observe Rail Safety Week; and

Whereas this important observance should lead to greater safety awareness and a reduction in highway-rail grade crossing collisions, derailments, rail worker fatalities, and other railroad incidents: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the designation of “Rail Safety
3 Week”;

4 (2) expresses strong support for—

5 (A) the goals and ideals of Rail Safety
6 Week;

1 (B) efforts to reduce highway-rail grade
2 crossing and trespasser-related incidents, fatali-
3 ties, and injuries;

4 (C) efforts by the Federal Railroad Admin-
5 istration to improve safety cultures at Class I
6 freight railroads;

7 (D) efforts by the Department of Trans-
8 portation to implement the recommendations of
9 the National Transportation Safety Board's in-
10 vestigation into the February 3, 2023, Norfolk
11 Southern derailment in East Palestine, Ohio;

12 (E) the residents of East Palestine, Ohio,
13 Western Pennsylvania, and all other commu-
14 nities impacted by the derailment and release of
15 hazardous materials on February 3, 2023;

16 (F) the brave actions of first responders
17 who combat releases of hazardous materials
18 across the United States, including the brave
19 actions of the more than 300 firefighters from
20 50 fire departments who responded to the Feb-
21 ruary 3, 2023, derailment in East Palestine,
22 Ohio; and

23 (G) rail workers who have died or been in-
24 jured while working to keep people and goods

1 moving throughout the United States and the
2 families of those rail workers; and

3 (3) encourages the people of the United
4 States—

5 (A) to participate in Rail Safety Week
6 events and activities;

7 (B) to educate themselves and others on
8 how to be safe around railroad tracks; and

9 (C) to support efforts to improve the safe
10 transportation of hazardous material by rail.