

## S 1626

### Railroad Reform, Enhancement, and Efficiency Act

**Congress:** 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Transportation and Public Works

**Introduced:** Jun 18, 2015

**Current Status:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 466.

**Latest Action:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 466. (May 16, 2016)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1626>

## Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** MS • **Chamber:** Senate

## Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]	D · NJ		Jun 18, 2015

## Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	May 16, 2016

## Subjects & Policy Tags

### Policy Area:

Transportation and Public Works

## Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 S 1732	Related bill	May 23, 2016: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 478.

## **Railroad Reform, Enhancement, and Efficiency Act**

This bill reauthorizes FY2016-FY2019 grants to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for:

- a Northeast Corridor investment account,
- a state-supported account,
- a long-distance account,
- an other national network activities account, and
- national infrastructure and safety investments.

Appropriations are also authorized for the same period for:

- National Transportation Safety Board rail investigations, and
- Amtrak's Office of the Inspector General.

The bill revises requirements for the rail cooperative research program. Allocation of a specified amount is made for each fiscal year to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for railroad research and development programs.

Amtrak shall establish internal controls to ensure its costs, revenues, and other compensation are allocated to its Northeast Corridor train services or infrastructure, Amtrak-operated state-supported routes and long-distance routes, and other Amtrak national network activities.

DOT shall establish substantive and procedural requirements for the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak routes, and national network investment capital grant requests.

DOT shall establish:

- a Northeast Corridor investment account,
- a state-supported account,
- a long-distance account, and
- an other national network activities account.

Amtrak shall prepare:

- final five-year business line plans for Northeast Corridor train services, Amtrak-operated state-supported routes and long-distance routes, and Amtrak ancillary services; and
- five-year asset plans for Amtrak infrastructure and equipment.

DOT shall establish the State-Supported Route Committee.

The bill revises alternate passenger rail service pilot program requirements.

DOT shall develop: (1) a program for issuing three-year competitive operating assistance grants to eligible public and private entities to initiate, restore, or enhance intercity rail passenger service; and (2) a federal-state partnership program for issuing competitive grants to the aforementioned entities for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, or repair major infrastructure assets for providing intercity passenger rail service.

The bill requires the Northeast Corridor Commission to:

- develop a capital investment plan for the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the Virginia Avenue interlocking in the District of Columbia, and the Northeast Corridor branch lines connecting to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Spuyten Duyvil, New York; and
- update, once every 10 years, a Northeast Corridor service development plan.

DOT shall: (1) develop and distribute to each state a state-specific highway-rail grade crossing action plan to improve safety, and (2) conduct a post-accident assessment of the Amtrak Northeast Regional Train #188 crash on May 12, 2015.

DOT may make grants to eligible public and private entities to assist in financing the cost of rail projects to improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of passenger and freight rail transportation systems.

DOT shall issue regulations requiring Class I railroads transporting hazmat to:

- generate accurate, real-time, and electronic train consist information, including emergency response information;
- grant each applicable fusion center secure access to such information;
- require each such fusion center to supply that information to state and local first responders, emergency response officials, and law enforcement personnel involved in the response to or investigation of an accident, incident, or public health or safety emergency involving the rail transportation; and
- establish security and confidentiality protections to prevent the release of such information to unauthorized persons.

DOT shall: (1) issue a notice of proposed rulemaking to require each railroad carrier transporting a Class 3 flammable liquid to maintain an oil spill response plan, and (2) promulgate regulations to require each railroad carrier that provides regularly scheduled intercity rail passenger or commuter rail passenger transportation to the public to install inward- and outward-facing image recording devices in all controlling locomotive cabs and cab car operating compartments in such passenger trains.

The bill revises rail passenger transportation liability requirements to increase from \$200 million to \$295 million the aggregate allowable award to all rail passengers, against all defendants, for all claims, including claims for punitive damages, arising from a single rail passenger accident or incident.

#### *Track, Railroad, and Infrastructure Network Act*

The bill exempts improvements to, maintenance, rehabilitation, or operation of railroad or rail transit lines (but not stations) that are in use or were historically used for the transportation of goods or passengers from federal policies and requirements for the preservation of public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.

#### *Railroad Infrastructure Financing Improvement Act*

The bill amends the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 to direct DOT to revise requirements for direct loans and loan guarantees to railroad entities under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program.

## Actions Timeline

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- **May 16, 2016:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Thune with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report.
- **May 16, 2016:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 466.
- **Jun 25, 2015:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Jun 18, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 18, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.