

S 576

Railway Safety Act of 2023

Congress: 118 (2023–2025, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Transportation and Public Works

Introduced: Mar 1, 2023

Current Status: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 284.

Latest Action: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 284. (Dec 13, 2023)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/576>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]

Party: Democratic • State: OH • Chamber: Senate

Cosponsors (11 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Casey, Robert P., Jr. [D-PA]	D · PA		Mar 1, 2023
Sen. Fetterman, John [D-PA]	D · PA		Mar 1, 2023
Sen. Hawley, Josh [R-MO]	R · MO		Mar 1, 2023
Sen. Rubio, Marco [R-FL]	R · FL		Mar 1, 2023
Sen. Vance, J. D. [R-OH]	R · OH		Mar 1, 2023
Sen. Smith, Tina [D-MN]	D · MN		Mar 30, 2023
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy [D-MN]	D · MN		Apr 19, 2023
Sen. Braun, Mike [R-IN]	R · IN		May 9, 2023
Sen. Marshall, Roger [R-KS]	R · KS		May 9, 2023
Sen. Romney, Mitt [R-UT]	R · UT		May 9, 2023
Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI]	D · WI		May 10, 2023

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	Mar 16, 2023
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	Dec 13, 2023

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Transportation and Public Works

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
118 HR 8996	Related bill	Jul 12, 2024: Referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.
118 HR 1674	Related bill	Mar 22, 2023: Referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

Railway Safety Act of 2023

This bill addresses safety requirements for rail carriers and trains transporting hazardous materials.

Specifically, the Department of Transportation (DOT) must issue safety regulations for trains carrying hazardous materials to require that rail carriers or shippers (1) provide state emergency response commissioners with advanced notice and information about the hazardous materials; (2) reduce blocked rail crossings; and (3) comply with certain requirements regarding train length and weight specifications, track standards, speed restrictions, and response plans.

DOT must also establish requirements for wayside defect detectors. These are used by railway systems alongside the tracks to detect defects and failures (e.g., wheel bearing failures). Current federal regulations do not require their use, but federal guidance does address their placement and use. Under the bill, DOT must issue regulations establishing requirements for the installation, repair, testing, maintenance, and operation of wayside defect detectors for each rail carrier operating a train carrying hazardous materials.

The bill also

- increases the maximum fines DOT may impose on rail carriers for violating safety regulations,
- requires DOT to update rail car inspection regulations and audit the federal inspection program,
- requires a minimum two-person crew for certain freight trains,
- phases out certain railroad tank cars by May 1, 2025 (four years sooner than required under current law),
- expands training for local first responders,
- imposes a new fee on certain rail carriers, and
- provides funding for research and development to improve railway safety.

Actions Timeline

- **Dec 13, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Cantwell with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report.
- **Dec 13, 2023:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 284.
- **May 10, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Mar 16, 2023:** Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Hearings held.
- **Mar 1, 2023:** Introduced in Senate
- **Mar 1, 2023:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.