HR 971

RAIL Act

Congress: 119 (2025–2027, Current)
Chamber: House
Policy Area: Transportation and Public Works
Introduced: Feb 4, 2025
Current Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.
Latest Action: Referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials. (Feb 4, 2025)
Official Text: https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/971

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Sykes, Emilia Strong [D-OH-13]
Party: Democratic • **State:** OH • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (7 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Beatty, Joyce [D-OH-3]	D · OH		Feb 4, 2025
Rep. Brown, Shontel M. [D-OH-11]	D · OH		Feb 4, 2025
Rep. Kaptur, Marcy [D-OH-9]	D · OH		Feb 4, 2025
Rep. Landsman, Greg [D-OH-1]	D · OH		Feb 4, 2025
Rep. Rulli, Michael A. [R-OH-6]	R · OH		Feb 4, 2025
Rep. Miller, Max L. [R-OH-7]	R · OH		Feb 6, 2025
Rep. Elfreth, Sarah [D-MD-3]	D · MD		Mar 10, 2025

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee	House	Referred to	Feb 4, 2025

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Transportation and Public Works

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Summary (as of Feb 4, 2025)

Reducing Accidents In Locomotives Act or the RAIL Act

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 (1) provide state emergency response commissioners with advance 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.

Further, DOT must update rail car inspection regulations and audit related inspection programs. This includes prohibiting a railroad from limiting the time required for an employee to complete a railcar, locomotive, or brake safety inspection.

The bill also

- increases the maximum fines DOT may impose on rail carriers for violating safety regulations;
- establishes a statutory requirement for freight trains to have at least two crew members, with exceptions;
- phases out certain railroad tank cars by May 1, 2030;
- expands training for local first responders; and
- imposes a new fee on certain rail carriers.

Actions Timeline

- **Feb 4, 2025:** Introduced in House
- **Feb 4, 2025:** Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
- **Feb 4, 2025:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

LegiList

CONGRESS, MADE CLEAR.

Search Every Federal Bill, Law, and Vote

LegiList is the fastest way to research Congress. Track any bill from introduction to enactment, see how every legislator voted, follow committee activity, and read the full text of every bill — all in one place, always up to date.

legilist.com

Free Course: Learn How Congress Actually Works

LegiList Learn is a free, self-paced course that walks through the entire legislative process — from drafting a bill to a presidential signature. Seven modules, plain language, no politics. Earn a certificate when you finish.

legilist.com/learn

Public data belongs to the public. — legilist.com