

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1631

5 By: Representatives V. Flowers, Richardson, Jett, Godfrey, Ennett, Springer
6 By: Senators L. Chesterfield, C. Tucker
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO REGULATE THE LENGTH OF RAILROAD TRAIN
10 OPERATED ON A MAIN LINE OR BRANCH LINE; TO DECLARE AN
11 EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12
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Subtitle

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15 TO REGULATE THE LENGTH OF A RAILROAD
16 TRAIN OPERATED ON A MAIN LINE OR BRANCH
17 LINE; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.
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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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22 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 23, Chapter 12, is amended to add an
23 additional subchapter to read as follows:
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Subchapter 11 – Railroad Train Operating Length

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27 23-12-1101. Legislative intent.

28 The General Assembly finds that:

29 (1) There are currently no regulations that specifically govern
30 the length of railroad trains;

31 (2) Railroad companies across the country are increasing the
32 length of their railroad trains as a way to reduce expenses;

33 (3) The Federal Railroad Administration and other federal
34 agencies have investigated whether increasing the length of railroad trains
35 is a safety risk;

36 (4) The operation on a main line or a branch line of a railroad



1 train that is excessive in length exposes the public to unnecessary dangers
2 and may cause disruptions of commerce; and

3 (5) The regulation of railroad train length is necessary for
4 public safety.

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6 23-12-1102. Definitions.

7 As used in this subchapter:

8 (1) "Branch line" means a secondary railroad line that branches
9 off from a main line;

10 (2) "Main line" means a Class I railroad documented in current
11 timetables filed as required under 49 C.F.R. § 217.7, as it existed on
12 January 1, 2021, that:

13 (A) Transports five million (5,000,000) or more gross tons
14 of railroad traffic a year; or

15 (B) Is used for regularly scheduled intercity or commuter
16 railroad passenger service, or both, that does not include tourist, scenic,
17 or historic railroad excursions;

18 (3)(A) "Railroad" means a form of nonhighway ground
19 transportation that runs on rails or electromagnetic guideways within this
20 state, including without limitation:

21 (i) Commuter railroad service or other short-haul
22 railroad passenger service in a metropolitan area; or

23 (ii) High-speed ground transportation systems that
24 connect metropolitan areas, without regard to whether those systems use new
25 technologies not associated with traditional railroads.

26 (B) "Railroad" does not include rapid transit operations
27 in a metropolitan area that are not connected to the general railroad system
28 of transportation;

29 (4) "Railroad company" means any corporation, company, or
30 individual that owns or operates any railroad in this state, whether as
31 owner, contractor, lessee, mortgagee, trustee, assignee, or receiver, and
32 their officers and agents; and

33 (5) "Railroad train" means one (1) or more locomotives with or
34 without cars, requiring an air brake test in accordance with 49 C.F.R. § 232,
35 as it existed on January 1, 2021, or 49 C.F.R. § 238, as it existed on
36 January 1, 2021, including without limitation:

- 1 (A) A single locomotive;
- 2 (B) Multiple locomotives coupled together; or
- 3 (C) One (1) or more locomotives coupled with one (1) or
- 4 more cars.

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6 23-12-1103. Maximum railroad train length.

7 A railroad train operating on a main line or branch line shall not
 8 exceed eight thousand five hundred feet (8,500') in length.

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10 23-12-1104. Civil penalty – Negotiation.

11 (a) The Arkansas Department of Transportation may impose on a railroad
 12 company an administrative penalty of:

13 (1) Not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) nor more than one
 14 thousand dollars (\$1,000) per foot over the maximum railroad train length
 15 authorized under § 23-12-1103; and

16 (2) Not more than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000)
 17 if a violation of § 23-12-1103 causes death or injury.

18 (b)(1) The amount of the administrative penalty under this section may
 19 be negotiated between the railroad company and the department.

20 (2) In determining the amount agreed upon in negotiation, the
 21 Director of State Highways and Transportation may consider:

22 (A) The nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the
 23 violation; and

24 (B) With respect to the violator:

25 (i) The degree of culpability;

26 (ii) Previous violations;

27 (iii) The ability to pay the penalty imposed; and

28 (iv) The ability to continue to do business if the
 29 penalty is imposed.

30 (c) The imposition of administrative penalties under this section be
 31 conducted under the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et
 32 seq.

33 (d) The penalty collected under subsection (a) of this section shall
 34 be used by the department for highway and infrastructure projects.

35 (e) A penalty imposed under this section, if not promptly paid to the
 36 department, shall be referred to the Attorney General for collection in

1 district court.

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3 SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
4 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that maintaining safe railroad
5 operating practices is necessary for public safety and commerce efficiency;
6 that maintaining limitations on railroad train length will ensure the safety
7 of the citizens of Arkansas; that a railroad company's desire to reduce costs
8 is not more important than the safety of the public and railroad employees;
9 and that this act conveys the importance of transportation infrastructure,
10 uninterrupted commerce, and the state's duty to protect its citizens.
11 Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately
12 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall
13 become effective on:

14 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

15 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
16 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
17 bill; or

18 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
19 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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