

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-037

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3 REQUESTING THAT THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION,
4 TECHNOLOGY, AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE
5 HOW TO ALLEVIATE TRAFFIC DELAYS CAUSED BY RAILROAD TRAINS
6 BLOCKING RAILROAD CROSSINGS.

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9 WHEREAS, the length of time that a railroad train may block a railroad
10 crossing is an issue for all motorists, especially motorists using rural
11 roadways where there may be few options for detouring around a blocked
12 railroad crossing; and

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14 WHEREAS, there are rules that railroad companies must follow to protect
15 public safety that sometimes require that railroad trains block intersections
16 for extended periods of time; and

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18 WHEREAS, there are many reasons that a railroad train may block a
19 railroad crossing, including without limitation while the operator of the
20 railroad train waits for:

- 21 (1) Another railroad train to pass or enter a railroad yard;
22 (2) A locomotive or railroad car to undergo repairs for
23 mechanical problems; or
24 (3) A new crew of railroad employees to relieve the current crew
25 of railroad employees so that railroad employees do not work more than the
26 twelve (12) hours per day permitted under federal law; and

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28 WHEREAS, the majority of states have passed laws to place restrictions
29 on the amount of time a railroad crossing may be blocked by a railroad train;
30 and

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32 WHEREAS, state laws vary, but generally a railroad train is prohibited
33 from blocking railroad crossing for more than twenty (20) minutes; and

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35 WHEREAS, Arkansas Code § 23-12-1007 prohibits a corporation, company,
36 or person owning or operating any railroad train in the state to permit a

1 standing railroad train to obstruct any public highway, road, street, or
2 other railroad crossing for more than ten (10) minutes; and

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4 WHEREAS, traffic delays caused by railroad trains blocking railroad
5 crossings have far-reaching effects, and federal regulations do not currently
6 set a time limit for railroad trains blocking railroad crossings; and

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8 WHEREAS, states that have studied traffic delays caused by railroad
9 trains and hired railroad consultants to review local railroad switching yard
10 operations determined that moving railroad switching yards to less-congested
11 areas may lead to fewer traffic delays; and

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13 WHEREAS, railroad operations are authorized and regulated by the
14 Federal Railroad Administration; and

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16 WHEREAS, state laws or local ordinances may not be enforceable to
17 control the length of time a railroad crossing may be blocked by a railroad
18 train,

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20 NOW THEREFORE,

21 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, TECHNOLOGY,
22 AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

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24 THAT the Senate Committee on Public Transportation, Technology, and
25 Legislative Affairs conduct a study to determine how to alleviate traffic
26 delays caused by railroad trains blocking railroad crossings.

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29 Respectfully submitted,

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33 Senator Bill Sample

34 District 14

35 Prepared by: DTP/DTP

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