

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 317

BY REPRESENTATIVES BAYHAM, ADAMS, BERAULT, BOUDREAUX, CARVER, DICKERSON, EDMONSTON, EGAN, FISHER, GLORIOSO, TRAVIS JOHNSON, MANDIE LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, MENA, MURRAY, MUSCARELLO, NEWELL, OWEN, SCHLEGEL, TAYLOR, THOMPSON, VENTRELLA, AND WYBLE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to convene a diagnostic review team to study any potential hazards of the increasing railroad activity on the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo Street Wharf.

WHEREAS, Norfolk Southern Railway is a Class I freight railroad operating in the Eastern United States, with key infrastructure that includes approximately a six mile rail bridge on the Lake Pontchartrain Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the Alabo Street Wharf in New Orleans was originally a slaughterhouse that was purchased by the Port of New Orleans to transport river and train cargo, including lumber, copper, and sugar; and

WHEREAS, this rail corridor has been largely dormant for decades; and

WHEREAS, the Port of New Orleans has entered into a fifteen-year lease agreement with Sunrise Foods International to convert the Alabo Street Wharf in the Lower Ninth Ward, Holy Cross, and other St. Bernard Parish neighborhoods into a specialized terminal for importing organic grain, transported by Norfolk Southern trains; and

WHEREAS, in 2026, there were multiple incidents involving Norfolk Southern trains colliding with vehicles in Arabi, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2026, an eighteen-wheeler truck collided with a Norfolk Southern train; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2026, a Norfolk Southern train collided with a vehicle, leading to the closure of Judge Perez Drive and Patricia Street; and

WHEREAS, there are multiple incidents in Alabama involving Norfolk Southern trains; and

WHEREAS, some tracks run within fifteen feet of the neighborhood residents's front doors; and

WHEREAS, grain dust is an S-1 high-hazard classified material and can become combustible under certain conditions and poses a potential environmental and safety hazard; and

WHEREAS, residents surrounding these tracks argue there has been no recent comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with this high-intensity industrial use of these trains; and

WHEREAS, these tracks may pose a safety hazard due to their dangerous infrastructure, including tight tracks and non-standard curves on narrow residential streets; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 48:390 authorizes the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development to complete a study of all public railroad grade crossings to establish priorities for improvement, relocation, or closure in compliance with federal guidelines and requires the development of a prioritized plan for implementing railroad grade crossing improvements, relocations or closures pursuant to the Railroad Highway Crossing Program, 23 U.S.C. 130; and

WHEREAS, 23 CFR Part 646 outlines regulations for Federal-aid highway projects involving railroad facilities, specifically focusing on safety improvements, crossing elimination, insurance requirements, and cost-sharing between states and railroads; and

WHEREAS, there is a potential environmental and public safety issue arising out of expansion of rail activity in this area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to convene a diagnostic review team to conduct a study to assess the potential hazards of increasing activity on the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo Street Wharf and potential ways to prevent any foreseeable harm to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and Development shall submit a written report detailing its findings to the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works prior to January 1, 2027.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES