

2021 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 190

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

TRANSPORTATION/DEV DEPT. Requests the Department of Transportation and Development to study the length and danger of longer freight trains.

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to study the safety, effects, and other impacts of longer freight trains.

WHEREAS, more than six hundred freight railroads operate in the United States; and

WHEREAS, each Class I railroad operates in multiple states over thousands of miles of track; and

WHEREAS, the seven Class I railroads are BNSF Railway Co., CSX Transportation, and Trunk Corporation (Canadian National's operations), Kansas City Southern Railway, Norfolk Southern, Soo Line Corporation (Canadian Pacific's operations), and Union Pacific Railroad; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the Class I freight trains have increased in length in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO-19-443) indicated the average freight train length has increased about twenty-five percent since 2008, with average lengths of 1.2 and 1.4 miles in 2017; and

WHEREAS, one railroad runs a three mile long train twice weekly; and

WHEREAS, the excessive length of freight trains creates concerns with long delays and blocking traffic at road crossings, impeding emergency responders, and prompting

1 unsafe pedestrian behavior; such as, climbing through stopped trains; and

2 WHEREAS, there are also concerns that longer trains could lead to loss of radio
3 communications among crew members and may cause delays at rail sidings and yards; and

4 WHEREAS, the excessive length and the potential risk of danger of train derailments
5 requires the careful review and evaluation of all the circumstances that contribute to them
6 in an effort to ensure the safe operation of longer freight trains on highway railroad
7 crossings.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
9 does hereby urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to study
10 the safety, effects, and impact of longer freight trains.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the department's recommendations shall identify
12 dangers and measures to reduce the impact of longer freight trains on highway railroad
13 crossings and, at a minimum, shall include the following considerations:

14 (1) The changes in freight train length over time.

15 (2) The safety considerations for operating longer freight trains.

16 (3) The potential safety risks.

17 (4) The best way to resolve railroad crossing issues.

18 (5) The railroads' financial and operational advantages and disadvantages to
19 operating longer trains.

20 (6) The findings of the Federal Highway Administration study conducted on train
21 length safety.

22 (7) The safety implications and difference between trains carrying flammable
23 hazardous cargo and hazardous freight.

24 (8) The trains traveling within and outside the city limits, including rural and
25 highway areas, along with areas otherwise densely populated, with and without hazardous
26 or flammable freight and nonhazardous freight.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and
28 Development shall submit a written report detailing its findings and recommendations to the
29 Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works prior to March 1, 2022.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the

1 Department of Transportation and Development.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

SR 190 Original	DIGEST 2021 Regular Session	Boudreaux
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Requests the Dept. of Transportation and Development to study the safety, effects, and impact of longer freight trains. Requires a written report to the Senate Transportation, Highways and Public Works Committee prior to March 1, 2022.