

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 16

Senators Geiss, Camilleri, Singh, Polehanki and Chang offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to urge the Federal Railroad Administration and
2 the United States Congress to enact policies, such as the Railway
3 Safety Act of 2023, to prevent further accidents like train
4 derailments occurring across the nation since the beginning of this
5 year.

6 Whereas, On February 3, 2023, a Norfolk Southern Railway
7 Company train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, spilling hazardous
8 chemicals. Approximately 50 cars were involved. The spill killed
9 wildlife, prompted hundreds of people to evacuate their homes, and
10 caused many residents to complain about rashes, sore throats, and
11 headaches; and

12 Whereas, On February 16, 2023, a Norfolk Southern Railway

1 Company train derailed in Van Buren Township near a residential
2 area 30 miles west of downtown Detroit. Approximately 30 cars were
3 involved in the derailment, including one containing liquid
4 chlorine. While no immediate environmental repercussions from this
5 incident have been reported, this disaster could have been just as
6 devastating as the derailment in Ohio; and

7 Whereas, On February 28, 2023, a Seminole Gulf Railway train
8 derailed near Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport in Florida.
9 Six boxcars tipped over, including one carrying 30,000 gallons of
10 propane. While the train was reported as being minimally staffed
11 and carrying even more propane, the incident was luckily not as
12 disastrous as it could have been; and

13 Whereas, The Federal Railroad Administration and the United
14 States Congress need to enact policies to improve railroad safety
15 and prevent further derailments from occurring. These policies
16 should entail mandating two-person crews on each train, shortening
17 maximum train lengths, ensuring better communication with local
18 emergency management officials and first responders whenever
19 transporting hazardous waste through communities, reducing the
20 frequency of blocked crossings, reducing the length of time that
21 railroad crossings are blocked by passing or standing trains,
22 giving local governments the authority to identify emergency routes
23 that cannot be blocked by passing trains, regulating defect
24 detectors and trains, and requiring Class 1 rails to implement the
25 Confidential Close Call Reporting System. Congress should also
26 amend the United States Code to remove provisions preempting state
27 laws that could enhance railroad safety; now, therefore, be it

28 Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the Federal Railroad
29 Administration and the United States Congress to enact policies to

1 prevent accidents like train derailments occurring across the
2 nation since the beginning of this year; and be it further

3 Resolved, That we urge the United States Senate to pass the
4 Railway Safety Act of 2023 to enhance the safety requirements for
5 trains transporting hazardous materials; and be it further

6 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
7 Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration and the
8 members of the Michigan congressional delegation.