

1 SJR31
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3 By Senator Ward
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 09-APR-15

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8 URGING THE GOVERNOR TO ESTABLISH THE ALABAMA
9 COMMISSION ON RAILWAY SAFETY.

10
11 WHEREAS, the Legislature is committed to the
12 protection and well-being of all citizens of this state; and

13 WHEREAS, a safe and efficient railway system is
14 vital for businesses and industries currently operating in
15 this state and for future economic development in this state;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that the
18 operation of the rail transportation system has created
19 millions of jobs and generated billions of dollars over the
20 years in the national economy; and

21 WHEREAS, there are approximately 700 fatalities each
22 year related to the operation of the rail transportation
23 system in the United States; and

24 WHEREAS, railroad operations that routinely block
25 highway and road crossings present transportation and other

1 critical issues for municipal and county governments across
2 the state; and

3 WHEREAS, innovations that enhance the safety of
4 railroad operations in this state benefit both the general
5 public and railroad employees; and

6 WHEREAS, technological and innovative advancements
7 in railroad safety improve the efficiency of railroads in this
8 state, which, in turn, lower freight rates thereby enhancing
9 the competitive position of businesses and industries in the
10 state that rely on railroads to transport both raw materials
11 and finished products; and

12 WHEREAS, it is imperative to study the current
13 operation of the rail transportation system in this state to
14 identify areas of risk to public safety and advance proven and
15 innovative technologies and procedures to promote public
16 railway safety; now therefore,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
18 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the Governor of the State of
19 Alabama is urged to create a 15-member Alabama Railroad Safety
20 Commission to annually review the current railroad safety
21 laws, regulations, and procedures in this state and recommend
22 and advance necessary changes, including the implementation of
23 innovative technology, to promote and enhance public railway
24 safety in this state.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That membership of the
26 Alabama Railroad Commission be comprised of the following:

1 (1) The President of the Public Service Commission,
2 or his or her designee.

3 (2) The Director of the Alabama Department of
4 Transportation, or his or her designee.

5 (3) The Director of the Alabama Emergency Management
6 Agency, or his or her designee.

7 (4) The Secretary of the Alabama Law Enforcement
8 Agency, or his or her designee.

9 (5) The Alabama State Fire Marshal, or his or her
10 designee.

11 (6) The President of the Alabama Sheriff's
12 Association, or his or her designee, may appoint a maximum of
13 two sworn law enforcement officers currently working in an
14 area with rail grades and crossings in their jurisdictions.

15 (7) The President of the Alabama Association of
16 Chiefs of Police, or his or her designee, may appoint a
17 maximum of two sworn law enforcement officers currently
18 working in an area with rail grades and crossings in their
19 jurisdictions.

20 (8) The President of the Alabama Firefighters
21 Association, or his or her designee, may appoint a maximum of
22 two firefighters currently working in an area with rail grades
23 and crossings in their jurisdictions.

24 (9) The General Counsel for the Alabama League of
25 Municipalities, or his or her designee.

1 (10) The Executive Director of the Association of
2 County Commissioners of Alabama, or his or her designee.

3 (11) Two members appointed by the Governor, one
4 representing the railroad industry and one representing the
5 Alabama Railway Association.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all state agencies are
7 urged to cooperate fully with the commission in accomplishing
8 the objectives of the commission, and that a copy of this
9 resolution be presented to the Governor so that our sincere
10 and continuing interest in this matter is known.