



# THE RAILWAY SAFETY ACT: WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Many voices across country join America's freight railroads in speaking out against the Railway Safety Act. Notably, both *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* have written on the matter.

## The Wall Street Journal

“Railroads get larger safety benefits if they prioritize spending on upgrades. If they are required to spend more on unneeded labor, that means less money for safety-enhancing technologies such as track-inspecting drones. Unlike Amtrak, private railroads can't get Washington to cover financial shortfalls. They must either absorb the costs of unnecessary regulation—which means less investment for system upgrades—or pass them along to customers, which include energy companies, farmers and retailers.” ([JD Vance's Railroad Act](#))

## The Washington Post

“It's not as though railroad safety has declined in the meantime. By several measures, including the rates of derailments and employee injuries, 2025 was the [safest year on record](#). And railroads are much safer today than they were [before 1992](#), when crews of three or more were standard. Transporting goods by rail is [much safer](#) than doing so by truck, which is the closest substitute. Increasing costs for rail through pointless mandates would result in some shippers opting for trucks instead, causing more highway traffic and a greater probability of freight accidents overall. Just because a bill has “safety” in the title doesn't mean it will make Americans safer.” ([Opinion | The Railway Safety Act would not have prevented East Palestine tragedy](#))

“Regulation should be based on evidence, especially when that it could be costly. Another provision of the bill, which would mandate sensors to detect overheated wheel bearings every 15 miles, would cost an estimated \$1.1 billion to \$2.2 billion. There's no evidence that the 15-mile rule would have prevented the East Palestine accident. The sensors have already significantly reduced overheating accidents without being mandated at all....It's not as though railroad safety has declined in the meantime. By several measures, including the rates of derailments and employee injuries, 2025 was the safest year on record. And railroads are much safer today than they were before 1992, when crews of three or more were standard.” ([Legislators think they're making trains safer. Evidence says otherwise.](#))

# Major U.S. Industries

- 18 different agriculture groups in a [letter](#) to congress, urged them to adopt targeted, evidence-based rail safety measures while rejecting Railway Safety Act provisions they say would raise costs, slow freight operations and disrupt farm supply chains. They warn that mandates like train-length limits and expanded manual inspections lack proven safety benefits and could hinder technology adoption, harming rural shippers who rely heavily on efficient rail service.
- The American Energy Alliance [argues](#) that provisions in the Railway Safety Act, such as crew size mandates, detector-spacing rules and rigid inspection requirements would raise costs, slow energy shipments and hinder technological innovation without clear safety benefits. It urges the Administration to pursue evidence-based rail policy to protect energy security and manufacturing.
- Coal groups (America's Power, National Coal Transportation Association, and Power the Future) argue that prescriptive mandates would negatively impact the coal industry, leading to higher energy costs, supply disruptions, and added pressure on domestic producers and consumers alike.

# Expert Voices

- Americans for Tax Reform says Congress should [reject](#) Railway Safety Act provisions because they raise costs without improving safety. It says the East Palestine derailment stemmed from a mechanical failure, yet the Act pushes two-person crew mandates and more manual inspections despite federal findings that these measures don't enhance safety. The rules mainly benefit unions through added dues while increasing consumer prices.
- The Alliance for Innovation & Infrastructure warns that lawmakers often rush into [regulations](#) after tragedies like the East Palestine derailment, pushing long-standing proposals that don't match the facts. The core message is that Congress should base reforms on evidence, not emotion or symbolism.
- Marc Scribner warns against RSA in his Reason Foundation [article](#) arguing that the Railway Safety Act of 2026 still contains the same flaws as the rushed 2023 version. The bill was built on old union backed proposals rather than the actual causes of the East Palestine derailment and that even after the NTSB's final 2024 report, the bill's major provisions don't match the agency's findings.
- Patrick McLaughlin said in a [interview](#) with Federal Newswire that deregulation has boosted investment and productivity, while new mandates, especially proposals like the Railway Safety Act risk reversing those gains. He says many regulations divert resources from innovation, that AI will streamline compliance but cannot fix an outdated regulatory process, and that courts are increasingly scrutinizing vague agency authority.

# Government Officials

- State and local officials as well as business leaders from [Colorado](#), [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#), [Kansas](#), [Kentucky](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Missouri](#), [North Carolina](#), [New Jersey](#), [New York](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [Tennessee](#), [Texas](#), [Washington](#), [Wisconsin](#) and [West Virginia](#) opposes the regulatory mandates associated with the Railway Safety Act.
- Additionally, 15 local officials from [Ohio](#). As well as supporting nearly 5,000 jobs and preventing more than 14 million truck trips. Rail helps keep consumer prices stable, supports reshoring and manufacturing growth, and maintains efficient supply chains. The letter goes on to urge Congress to oppose one-size-fits-all operational mandates such as crew size rules or train length limits that could raise costs and shift freight to highways. Rail safety should be advanced through innovation, including automated track inspection and other modern technologies.