

## Proponent Testimony for House Resolution 33

Thank you, Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and House Government Oversight Committee Members for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of House Resolution 33.

My name is John Zehentbauer, and I am the Vice President of the Columbiana County Township Association, as well as a Hanover Township Trustee. Along with Paul Lease, the President of the association and a Butler Township Trustee, we are in full support of House Resolution 33. We are here today to provide public testimony in favor of this bill, as trustees who have a vested interest in its passage.

As many of you may already know, a Norfolk Southern train carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine, Ohio on February 3, 2023. Although the train was not initially classified as a high-hazard flammable train by the United States Department of Transportation, ten of the fifty railroad cars that derailed contained chemicals that are dangerous to life and the environment, including vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate, and ethylene glycol monobutyl. This derailment caused hazardous chemicals to contaminate the air and water of East Palestine, which has forced its residents to live in fear for their health.

The State of Ohio was not aware that a train carrying such hazardous materials was passing through the state, which put our communities at risk and made it challenging for local and state officials to prepare for and respond to potential hazards. This disaster was a wakeup call for our community and the nation as a whole. We were not prepared for such an event, and we did not have the necessary information to respond in a timely and effective manner. It was not until several hours after the derailment that local officials were even informed of the hazardous materials being transported through our community. This is unacceptable. We need to ensure that state and local governments are informed when hazardous materials are being transported through their jurisdictions so that we can adequately prepare and respond in the event of an emergency.

Ohio House Resolution 33 urges Congress to require railroad companies to inform local and state government officials when trains carrying potentially hazardous materials travel through their respective jurisdictions. This is a common-sense solution that will help prevent future disasters like the one we experienced in East Palestine. For this reason, I urge the United States Congress to pass legislation that mandates railroad companies to inform local and state government officials when trains carrying potentially hazardous materials pass through their respective jurisdictions. This information is critical for the safety of our communities and the protection of our environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Representatives Robb Blasdel, McNally, Jordan, Williams, Loychik, Young, B., Click, Richardson, Grim, Galonski, Miranda, Weinstein, Baker, Brent, Forhan, Somani, Brown, Brennan, Miller, J., Santucci, Liston, Humphrey, Carruthers, Abrams, Gross, King, Manning, Sweeney, Isaacsohn, Schmidt, Miller, M., Upchurch, Lightbody, Troy, McClain, Abdullahi, Blackshear, Rogers, Jarrells, Miller, A., Russo, Mohamed, Denson, Thomas, C., Dean, Cutrona, Skindell, Dell'Aquila, Robinson, and Jones for their support of this crucial resolution.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Sincerely,

John Zehentbauer, Hanover Township Trustee (Columbiana County)

Paul Lease, Butler Township Trustee (Columbiana County)