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Committees:
Energy and Public Utilities - *Chair*
Select Committee on Rail Safety - *Chair*
Transportation - *Vice Chair*
Finance
Workforce & Higher Education
Governor's Executive Workforce Board
Ohio Turnpike Commission

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State Senator
26th District

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Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Resolution 196.

As you all know, the Select Committee on Rail Safety was created to gather a complete understanding on why the derailment in East Palestine happened and to help the citizens of Northeast Ohio and to not let anything like this happen again.

I want to thank Senators Rulli, Antonio, Blessing, Hicks-Hudson, Hoagland, Ingram, Kunze, Landis, and Roegner for their involvement and commitment in securing a safer rail system and identifying a strategic plan in case of future emergencies.

As a direct result from the Select Committee on Rail Safety, we now have a better understanding of trains, rail car transportation, and rail safety. Senate Resolution 196 correlates directly with our findings and applies my district's landfill issues of trains being improperly covered or uncovered.

As rail cars are passing through or stopping throughout Ohio, we currently do not have the knowledge of what is being transported in those rail cars. SR 196 would urge Congress to amend the Rail Safety Act of 2023 to create a study committee to analyze the benefits of securing rail cars that are carrying solid waste and require all rail shippers to secure all rail cars carrying solid waste to prevent littering. The current mesh coverings are not adequate in preventing trash from escaping the rail cars.

The amendment brought forth today is only a language change of "rail carriers" to "rail shippers." The purpose of this language change would be to remain consistent with the overall federal regulatory structure around rail service. This regulatory framework puts the responsibility of proper packaging of any shipment via rail on the shipper (customer), which is in line with the railroads' federal common carrier obligation. Shippers must certify that their carload is safe for transport and meets all federal regulations prior to handing that carload over to the railroads for transportation. These changes to SR 196 would be consistent with these federal standards.

Thank you, Chair, and I welcome any questions from the committee.



