

# **Public Hearing Testimony**

## **Written Submission**

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Mr. Chairmen and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before you on this important public safety issue for motorists, pedestrians and the men and women who work on our railroad tracks in Ohio and throughout the country.

We are here to offer our strong support for the Stop, Look, and Listen Bill that would amend current State Statute to include “or other on-track equipment”.

Under current Ohio law, maintenance of way, railroad contractors and other on-track equipment are not included concerning a motorist’s responsibilities when approaching a crossing. It is critically important when the gates are down, or when there is a train approaching or a flagman or stop sign, etc. present, that motor vehicles stop a safe distance from the crossing.

S, L, & L would update existing railroad crossing laws pertaining to motorist responsibilities at railroad crossings, making for a safer work place for our members and the motorists on Ohio’s roads.

The issue is that on-track maintenance equipment has evolved into “train like” machines that present many of the same dangers of a train not being able to stop on a dime. Through modernization of railroad on-track equipment our members now operate state of the art equipment on the tracks in Ohio. With this modernization comes size, noise, and additional duties. We are long gone from the days when push charts ran up and down the tracks.

While most of the public understands that trains occupy the tracks in their respective neighborhoods and to avoid them at all costs, not everyone is aware of the on-track maintenance and construction machines that travel on the track infrastructure in Ohio and around the country.

This is a true Safety Bill that will help protect Ohio's motorists and our members that work and live here in Ohio. Also; there is no cost to ODOT after this legislation is enacted.

Similar legislation has already passed in over 36 states so far.

There is currently active or pending legislation in 4 states (Arizona, Missouri, and Pennsylvania) in addition to this bill in Ohio

This legislation is supported by rail labor, the railroads themselves, railroad contractors, and in fact I have found no public opposition. It will help to clarify that there are other pieces of equipment that travel on tracks that present the same dangers to motorists as trains. Also, we will help to educate the public of this fact after the state statute is amended, working with the Ohio's Operation Life Saver and the Railroads Look, Listen and Live PSA programs. It is important to us not only that this legislation is passed but moreover to help educate motorists to the dangers at Rail Crossing.

In closing I would like to stress again, this legislation will save lives, both on and off the tracks here in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.