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Sponsor Testimony

Senate Bill 89

Public Utilities Committee

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Good Afternoon Chairman Beagle, Vice Chair LaRose, and Ranking Minority Member Williams and members of the Senate Public Utilities Committee. Thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on Senate bill 89, a bill that would establish standards for lighting in a rail yard and establish penalties for railroad companies that are in violation.

Railroads operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Rail yard operations can range from a variety of complex and often times dangerous tasks, especially at night, including lining switches, performing yard switching – including coupling cars in tracks, building a train, placing that train into an out-bound track, and coupling air hoses and performing required air brake tests in preparation of the departure of that train. When there is not adequate illumination it makes these operations hazardous; it can make even the simplest of tasks like walking risky. Railroad employees should be able to perform their duties safely no matter what time of day it is. Providing lighting standards in the workplace would not only deter workers from injury but also would increase workplace productivity.

Currently, the Ohio Revised Code mandates that rail yards be “well lighted” but there is no definition on what “well lighted” entails. This legislation would require rail yards to be lit in accordance with the standards established by the experts in the field- the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. Minnesota was the first in the nation to pass similar legislation and this bill would make Ohio a leader in rail safety.

Simply put, good quality lighting should be an indisputable priority in any workplace and this piece of legislation would help ensure that it is. Chairman Beagle and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 89. I am more than happy to answer any questions you might have.