

Oppose Harmful Railroad Regulations that Will Hurt Minnesota Businesses and Consumers

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong opposition to two proposed bills in the Minnesota Legislature, HF 3499/SF 4161 and HF 4357/SF 3943. These bills would impose costly and counterproductive regulations on railroads operating in Minnesota, harming our businesses, the overall economy, and the environment.

Limiting Train Lengths Will Harm Businesses and Consumers

HF 3499 (Brand)/ SF 4161 (Kupec)

- **Inefficiency drives up costs:** Limiting train lengths would force railroads to run more trains to move the same amount of freight. This would not only increase fuel consumption, but also drive up operating costs across the board, including labor, maintenance, and potential infrastructure upgrades.
- **Higher costs passed on to businesses and consumers:** Increased transportation costs for Minnesota businesses using rail freight would inevitably harm their competitiveness, potentially adding cost to nearly everything consumers buy.
- **Creates congestion and delays:** Shorter trains would lead to increased congestion on the rail network, impacting the efficient movement of all freight, including essential goods. These delays would also make it more difficult to expand passenger rail service in the state.

Mandating Wayside Detectors Threatens Supply Chain Efficiency

HF 4357 (Brand)/ SF 3943 (Kupec)

- **Costly mandates without clear safety benefits:** This bill would force railroads to install detectors at arbitrary locations, regardless of demonstrated need or effectiveness. This would divert resources away from other safety initiatives and potentially create unnecessary operational burdens with negligible safety benefit.
- **Disrupts supply chain fluidity:** Increased costs and inefficiencies resulting from this legislation would negatively impact the entire supply chain, harming Minnesota businesses and consumers who rely on the timely and affordable transportation of goods.

Broader Impacts of State-by-State Regulations

- **Federal jurisdiction:** Railroad operations fall under the clear jurisdiction of the federal government, and attempts by states to regulate train length have been invalidated by the Supreme Court. The FRA, in collaboration with rail industry experts and stakeholders, is better equipped to address specific safety concerns and establish standards for train operations and advanced inspection technologies. These bills represent an overreach that would create legal uncertainty and jeopardize supply chain reliability.
- **Harms the environment:** Forcing railroads to adopt less efficient practices would increase greenhouse gas emissions and undermine environmental sustainability goals. In some cases, it could even incentivize a shift of freight to less environmentally friendly transportation modes.

- **Disjointed regulations undermine a national network:** Railroads require a coordinated national framework for infrastructure, safety, and operations. Piecemeal state-level regulations create a patchwork of rules that hinder efficiency, increase costs, and ultimately hurt the competitiveness of American businesses.

We urge the Minnesota Legislature to **reject SF4161/HF3499 and SF3943/HF4357**. These bills would impose unnecessary burdens on a vital industry, causing far-reaching negative consequences for Minnesota businesses, consumers, and the environment. Instead, we encourage policymakers to focus on fostering a collaborative approach that allows for streamlined regulation at the federal level, ensuring railroads can continue to improve safety and efficiency while supporting economic growth.



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