



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Ron Latz
Chair, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155

SF 4161: Maximum train length establishment and penalties provision
Position: Oppose

Chair Latz:

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation¹ (Auto Innovators) is writing to express our opposition to SF 4161, which would limit the length of a train in the State of Minnesota to 8,500 feet.

Auto production remains the United States largest manufacturing sector. The American auto industry supports more than 10 million American jobs and represents nearly 5% of our nation's gross domestic product. Additionally, the American auto industry is a vibrant player in the global economy with exports of finished vehicles or parts to 213 countries around the world.

A reliable, competitive, and efficient North American freight rail system is vital to the success of the U.S. auto industry and the North American auto sector as a whole. Indeed, freight rail – both carload and intermodal service – helps to connect the United States, Mexican and Canadian auto industries to each other and to the rest of the world. Railroads carry upwards of 1.8 million carloads of motor vehicles and parts annually, accounting for nearly 75 percent of new cars and light trucks purchased in the United States.ⁱ

We oppose SF 4161 because Congress has established a preemptive federal regulatory scheme to ensure uniform rail operating and safety standards across the country. While there is not a federal statute that provides a federal standard for how long a train can be, there is a U.S. Supreme Court case directly on pointⁱⁱ and there is federal law that contains an express preemption establishing that only one agency has the jurisdiction to issue such a standard.ⁱⁱⁱ

Conclusion

We appreciate the state's concern for safety, but we must oppose SF 4161 due to its negative impact on interstate commerce and the fact that such regulations are likely preempted by federal

¹ From the manufacturers producing most vehicles sold in the U.S. to autonomous vehicle innovators to equipment suppliers, battery producers and semiconductor makers – Alliance for Automotive Innovation represents the full auto industry, a sector supporting 10 million American jobs and five percent of the economy. Active in Washington, D.C. and all 50 states, the association is committed to a cleaner, safer and smarter personal transportation future. www.autosinnovate.org.

law. Thank you for your consideration of our position. Please contact me at jfisher@autosinnovate.org if I can provide more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Josh Fisher
Senior Director, State Affairs
Alliance for Automotive Innovation

ⁱ <https://www.aar.org/issue/freight-rail-automotive-industry/>

ⁱⁱ *Southern Pacific Co. v. Arizona*, 325 U.S. 761 (1945).

ⁱⁱⁱ 49 U.S.C § 10501.