Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2024

The bipartisan Railroad Safety Enhancement Act is supported by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes (BMWE), the Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), the Transportation Communications Union (TCU), the Transport Workers Union (TWU), the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen (BRC), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), SMART-TD, and SMART-MD.

The *Railroad Safety Enhancement Act* consists of:

C3RS Requirement (Section 118):

- Requires all Class 1 railroads and Amtrak to enroll in the Confidential Close Call Reporting System ("C3RS") for two years.
- This program is run by an independent third party, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and allows railroads and their employees to report close calls, unsafe incidents, and share information industry-wide on best practices without fear of reprisal from management. It also prevents Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) enforcement for events reported.

ASKRAIL (Section 119):

- The ASKRAIL app is a mobile application used by first responders in collaboration with Class 1 railroads. It allows first responders to access accurate data about which hazardous materials a railcar is carrying so they can make informed decisions on how to respond to incidents. First responders must have accurate information about what they expect they will be fighting when reaching a scene.
- Requires the State Department of Transportations' eligible for specific grants to notify first responders in their state about the existence of the app and to certify to the FRA they have completed this requirement. Because derailments often occur in remote and isolated areas, service for the application can be unreliable.
- Creates the ASKRAIL Connectivity Pilot Program and authorizes $25 million per year. The pilot program creates a competitive bidding process to provide service in areas along the national rail network in most need of connectivity.

Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program (Section 120):

- Authorizes an additional $1 billion on top of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) advanced appropriations funding.
- According to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) during Congressional Testimony, rail crossings are the most dangerous part of America's rail network, in part because this is where our nation's highway and rail systems meet. Removing as many rail crossings as possible will help reduce deaths and relieve congestion in the rail network.

Telematic for Railcars (Sections 121 & 122):

Telematics Grant Program-Section 121

- Authorizes $100 million annually for the FRA to establish a grant program for railcar manufacturers to install onboard freight railcar telematics systems and gateway devices. The program will prioritize new freight railcars, as this is the easiest installation time and these cars have the longest lifespan, and tank cars carrying hazardous materials.
- The FRA will issue a report on the number of railcars with onboard telematics due to these funds.

Telematic Pilot Program-Section 122

- Authorizes $10 million annually for an FRA pilot program to develop onboard sensors, and look to the future capabilities of these sensors, including real-time visibility, wheel/bearing/hand brake/hatch, and temperature readings.
- Telematics will provide shippers and tank car owners with real-time visibility into the rail network. These devices will also monitor the railcar asset's health and provide valuable data to prevent incidents.