

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

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SENATE BILL 1255*

Short Title: Transfer Rail Safety.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Hoyle; and Carpenter.

Referred to: Transportation.

May 22, 1996

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO TRANSFER THE RAIL SAFETY SECTION FROM THE UTILITIES COMMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDY THE NEED FOR CONTINUATION OF THE RAIL SAFETY INSPECTION PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The statutory authority, powers, duties, and functions, records, personnel, property, unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations or other funds, including the functions of budgeting and purchasing, of the Rail Safety Section of the Transportation Division of the North Carolina Utilities Commission, is transferred to the Department of Transportation.

Sec. 2. G.S. 62-41 reads as rewritten:

"§ 62-41. To investigate accidents involving public utilities; to promote general safety program.

The Commission may conduct a program of accident prevention and public safety covering all public utilities with special emphasis on highway and transport safety and may investigate the causes of any accident on a ~~railroad or~~ highway involving a ~~public utility, or any accident in connection with any other~~ public utility. Any information obtained upon such investigation shall be reduced to writing and a report thereof filed in the office of the Commission, which shall be subject to public inspection but such report shall not

1 be admissible in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from such accident.
2 The Commission may adopt reasonable rules and regulations for the safety of the public
3 as affected by public utilities and the safety of public utility employees. The Commission
4 shall cooperate with and coordinate its activities for public utilities with similar programs
5 of the Division of Motor Vehicles, the Insurance Department, the Industrial Commission
6 and other organizations engaged in the promotion of highway safety and employee
7 safety."

8 Sec. 3. G.S. 62-235 is repealed.

9 Sec. 4. G.S. 136-18 is amended by adding two new subdivisions to read:

10 "(33) The Department of Transportation is empowered and directed, from
11 time to time, to carefully examine into and inspect the condition of each
12 railroad, its equipment and facilities, in regard to the safety and
13 convenience of the public and the railroad employees. If the
14 Department finds any equipment or facilities to be unsafe, it shall at
15 once notify the railroad company and require the company to repair the
16 equipment or facilities.

17 (34) The Department of Transportation may conduct a program of accident
18 prevention and public safety covering all railroads and may investigate
19 the cause of any railroad accident. In order to facilitate this program,
20 any railroad involved in an accident that must be reported to the Federal
21 Railroad Administration shall also notify the Department of
22 Transportation of the occurrence of the accident."

23 Sec. 5. G.S. 62-236 is recodified as G.S. 136-20.1 and reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 62iblock system and safety devices; automatic signals at railroad intersections.**

25 (a) ~~The Commission is empowered and directed to~~ Department of Transportation may
26 require any railroad company to install and put in operation and maintain upon the whole
27 or any part of its road an appropriate system of railroad signals and controls, a block
28 ~~system of telegraphy~~ signal system or any other reasonable safety device, but no railroad
29 company shall be required to install a block system upon any part of its road unless at
30 least eight trains each way per day are operated on that part.

31 (b) ~~The Commission is empowered and directed to~~ Department of Transportation may
32 require, when public safety demands, where two or more railroads cross each other at a
33 common grade, or any railroad crosses any stream or harbor by means of a bridge, to
34 install and maintain such a system of ~~interlocking or automatic~~ interlocking, block,
35 automatic, or automatic block signals as will render it safe for engines and trains to pass
36 over such crossings or bridge without stopping, and to apportion the cost of installation
37 and maintenance between said railroads as may be just and proper."

38 Sec. 6. The Secretary of Transportation shall study the provision of rail safety
39 inspection services in North Carolina by the State and the Federal Railroad
40 Administration and shall recommend to the General Assembly no later than June 1, 1997,
41 whether the State should continue to perform this service. The recommendation shall be
42 contained in a report filed with the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker
43 of the House of Representatives.

1 Sec. 7. The Department of Transportation shall implement this act within
2 available funds.

3 Sec. 8. This act becomes effective July 1, 1996.