

House Resolution 919

By: Representatives Williams of the 145th, Gilliard of the 162nd, Hitchens of the 161st, Powell of the 32nd, Campbell of the 171st, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Federal Railroad Administration to follow through with its efforts to regulate train
2 length; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the freight train length has a direct impact on the safety and the quality of life
4 for Georgians. Freight train length has significantly increased in recent years to lengths in
5 excess of three miles, causing many interruptions and delays in towns across Georgia;
6 instances of traffic backups which delay commuters, students, and businesses; and road
7 crossings blocked for days, which poses an extreme threat to the general public; and

8 WHEREAS, the railroad infrastructure was never designed to accommodate today's long
9 trains, making many of the typical infrastructure solutions inaccessible, such as sidings and
10 yarding; longer trains create operational issues, delaying the delivery of goods and hurting
11 Georgia businesses that depend on timely service; and

12 WHEREAS, railroad safety standards provide a regulatory framework for railroad
13 companies. How railroad companies carry out operations and workplace safety have a
14 profound effect on the safety and welfare of their workers, the community, and the general
15 public; and

16 WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration and other federal agencies have
17 investigated whether increasing the length of railroad trains is a safety risk; state and local
18 officials said in a recent GAO (Government Accountability Office) study that long trains
19 prolong their duration at crossings, posing challenges for emergency responders unable to
20 cross the tracks; and

21 WHEREAS, railroad professionals concur that excessively long trains are difficult to operate
22 and frequently create operational delays. Railroad professionals further concur that
23 excessively long trains create unsafe work conditions for railroad employees, such as the loss
24 of radio communication, the throwing of railroad conductors from the side of rail cars, and
25 encounters with angry motorists blocked at road crossings; and

26 WHEREAS, the operation of a railroad train that is excessive in length exposes the public
27 to unnecessary dangers and may cause disruptions of commerce. There are currently no
28 regulations that specifically govern the length of railroad trains, yet the regulation of railroad
29 train length is necessary for public safety; and

30 WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the State of Georgia believes that maintaining safe
31 railroad operating practices is necessary for public safety and commerce efficiency; that
32 maintaining limitations on railroad train length will ensure the safety of the citizens of
33 Georgia; that the safety of the public and railroad employees is of utmost importance; and
34 that this act conveys the importance of transportation infrastructure, uninterrupted commerce,
35 and the state's duty to protect its citizens.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
37 the members of this body strongly urge the Federal Railroad Administration to follow

38 through with its efforts to regulate train length, implementing a maximum train length of
39 8,500 feet, which is necessary for the preservation of public peace, health, and safety.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
41 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
42 public and the press.