



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 7059

LCO No. 4974



Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION

Introduced by:
(TRA)

AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT RAIL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) For the fiscal year ending June 30,
2 2026, the Department of Transportation shall fund the New Haven Line,
3 as defined in section 13b-78k of the general statutes, to the same level of
4 funding that existed prior to the reduction in funding due to the COVID-
5 19 public health emergency and the civil preparedness emergency
6 declared by the Governor on March 10, 2020.

7 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this
8 section: (1) "Class I freight railroad", "class I railroad" and "class II
9 railroad" have the same meanings as provided in 40 CFR 103.901, as
10 amended from time to time; (2) "helper services" means connecting a
11 locomotive to the front or back of a train to assist the train in ascending
12 or descending a grade; and (3) "hostling services" means moving a train
13 or locomotive a short distance in a railroad yard or mechanical facility.

14 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, no class I
15 freight railroad, class I railroad or class II railroad for transporting

16 freight that operates a train or locomotive in this state shall be operated
17 unless the train or locomotive contains a crew of not less than two
18 persons.

19 (c) The provisions of subsection (b) of this section do not apply to a
20 train or locomotive engaged in helper services or hostling services.

21 (d) A railroad company wilfully violating the provisions of this
22 section shall be fined (1) not less than two hundred fifty dollars, but not
23 more than one thousand dollars, for a first violation, (2) not less than
24 one thousand dollars, but not more than five thousand dollars, for a
25 second violation, and (3) not less than five thousand dollars, but not
26 more than ten thousand dollars, for a third or subsequent violation.

27 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this
28 section, "hotbox detector" means a device used to detect problems with
29 rail car components, including bearings, axles and brakes, by
30 monitoring the temperature of such components.

31 (b) A railroad company shall install a hotbox detector along every
32 twenty-mile segment of rail track in which passenger trains operate.
33 Such installation shall be (1) included in any new construction project
34 commencing on and after October 1, 2025, and (2) completed on existing
35 rail lines not later than October 1, 2026.

36 Sec. 4. Section 13b-236 of the general statutes is repealed and the
37 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

38 (a) For the purposes described in subsection (b) of this section, the
39 State Bond Commission shall have the power, from time to time to
40 authorize the issuance of bonds of the state in one or more series and in
41 principal amounts not exceeding in the aggregate [seventeen million
42 five hundred thousand] twenty million dollars.

43 (b) The proceeds of the sale of said bonds, to the extent of the amount
44 stated in subsection (a) of this section and subdivision (3) of subsection

45 (b) of section 46 of public act 23-205, as amended by section 55 of public
46 act 24-151, shall be used by the Department of Transportation for a
47 program of competitive grants for commercial rail freight lines
48 operating in the state for improvements and repairs to, and the
49 modernization of, existing rail, rail beds and related facilities. Such
50 program shall include the following: (1) (A) Grants of one hundred per
51 cent of the amount necessary to improve, repair or modernize state-
52 owned rights of way, and (B) grants of seventy per cent of the amount
53 necessary to improve, repair or modernize privately owned rail lines,
54 provided the commissioner may waive the requirement for a thirty per
55 cent matching grant if such improvement, repair or modernization
56 demonstrably increases rail freight traffic; and (2) preference for grants
57 shall be given to (A) freight rail projects that improve at-grade rail
58 crossings to eliminate hazards or increase safety, (B) freight rail projects
59 that provide connection to major freight generators, (C) projects that
60 further the goals and objectives of the Department of Transportation's
61 Connecticut State Rail Plan, and (D) freight rail projects that improve
62 freight rail infrastructure by increasing the capacity for rail freight
63 traffic.

64 (c) All provisions of section 3-20, or the exercise of any right or power
65 granted thereby, which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this
66 section are hereby adopted and shall apply to all bonds authorized by
67 the State Bond Commission pursuant to this section, and temporary
68 notes in anticipation of the money to be derived from the sale of any
69 such bonds so authorized may be issued in accordance with said section
70 3-20 and from time to time renewed. Such bonds shall mature at such
71 time or times not exceeding twenty years from their respective dates as
72 may be provided in or pursuant to the resolution or resolutions of the
73 State Bond Commission authorizing such bonds. None of said bonds
74 shall be authorized except upon a finding by the State Bond
75 Commission that there has been filed with it a request for such
76 authorization which is signed by or on behalf of the Secretary of the
77 Office of Policy and Management and states such terms and conditions

78 as said commission, in its discretion, may require. Said bonds issued
 79 pursuant to this section shall be general obligations of the state and the
 80 full faith and credit of the state of Connecticut are pledged for the
 81 payment of the principal of and interest on said bonds as the same
 82 become due, and accordingly and as part of the contract of the state with
 83 the holders of said bonds, appropriation of all amounts necessary for
 84 punctual payment of such principal and interest is hereby made, and
 85 the State Treasurer shall pay such principal and interest as the same
 86 become due.

87 Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Transportation
 88 shall study the feasibility of (1) operating hybrid trains on the Danbury
 89 branch line of the Metro-North Commuter Railroad, and (2) expanding
 90 the Danbury branch line to include the town of New Milford. Not later
 91 than February 1, 2026, the commissioner shall submit, in accordance
 92 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, the results of
 93 such study and any recommendations to the joint standing committee
 94 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
 95 transportation.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	13b-236
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) require the Department of Transportation to fund the New Haven Line, (2) establish minimum train crew size requirements for freight railroad companies operating in the state, (3) require the installation of hotbox detectors every twenty miles on any rail line in which passenger trains operate, (4) increase the amount of bond funds available for grants for commercial rail line improvements, and (5) study the feasibility of operating hybrid trains on the Danbury branch line of the Metro-North

Commuter Railroad and expanding such line to include the town of New Milford.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]