

## RESOLUTION 5-R-24

### **RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGTON, INDIANA, CALLING ON THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PASS THE FEDERAL RAILWAY SAFETY ACT (S.576/H.R.1674) TO SUPPORT AMERICA'S FIRST RESPONDERS AND KEEP TRAINS MOVING SAFELY IN COMMUNITIES**

**WHEREAS**, every day America's local first responders are called on to be the first line of defense for local communities when a train leaves its tracks with potentially devastating consequences, particularly when trains are carrying hazardous materials; and

**WHEREAS**, the local responders who responded to the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, in February of 2023, were not able to confirm the contents of the derailed train cars due to failures in the emergency communication chain between railroads, state emergency response, and local first responders leaving them unnecessarily exposed to hazardous chemicals and left them unable to know how to best protect their communities health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 1,100 trains derail across the United States annually and many communities have experienced multiple concerning derailments and deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, local governments employ, train, and prepare critical first responders nationally from limited local budgets for all types of emergency response including hazardous material spills from train derailments but also blocked crossing incidents in addition to all the essential community public safety tasks they must perform; and

**WHEREAS**, the ongoing costs to respond to the East Palestine derailment have surpassed \$1.1 billion, but even low-speed train derailments in rail yards create safety issues with over 300 deaths and injuries reported and over a billion dollars in damages reported in the last decade; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress remains responsible for rail interstate commerce safety, and failure to update and improve rail safety practices and penalties is becoming an unnecessary burden on local governments who are bearing the costs of emergency response for derailments but also economic losses from extensive blocked crossings; and

**WHEREAS**, America's local governments recognize that rail is an essential public infrastructure that can be a safe method to transport sensitive materials when proper maintenance is consistently prioritized due to financial incentives and that railroads and their shareholders benefit financially when trains stay on their tracks and continue operating safely.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGTON, INDIANA**, that the City of Huntington, Indiana, acting through its Common Council, calls on the United States Congress to pass the bipartisan *Railway Safety Act of 2023 (S.576/H.R.1674)* and address the impact of train derailments on the lives of America's local first responders, the unnecessary costs being passed along to local governments of all sizes, and the safety of communities in their districts;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Congress should enable the Federal Railroad Administration to fulfill the rail safety recommendations provided by the experts from the National

Transportation Safety Board in response to the hazardous material spills that occurred in East Palestine, Ohio, but also previous train derailments recommendations where hazardous materials were involved such as Paulsboro, New Jersey, and Maryville, Tennessee, among others;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Congress must reauthorize the National Transportation Safety Board on behalf of the American people to continuously respond to transportation safety emergencies, review the data and science behind transportation deaths and incidents objectively, and make appropriate specific recommendations;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Congress should fund the National Transportation Safety Board recommendations included within each Presidential transportation budget request as a matter of practice to continue to reduce the cost burden of transportation deaths on communities and the nation by making a safer transportation system; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that Congress should allow the Federal Railroad Administration to collect and act on data provided to them by local officials and members of the public related to blocked crossings which have led to children climbing over blocked trains and ambulances and firefighters being prevented from reaching residents in emergencies costing lives.

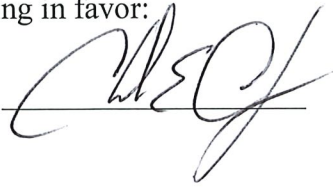
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Duly passed on first and final reading this 26 day of March 2024 by a vote of 6 in favor and 0 in opposition.

**CITY OF HUNTINGTON, INDIANA by its COMMON COUNCIL**

Voting in favor:

Voting in opposition:



Charles Chapman  
(President)

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P J Felton

\_\_\_\_\_



Dave Funk

\_\_\_\_\_



Todd Johnson

\_\_\_\_\_



Paul Pike

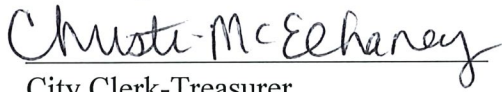
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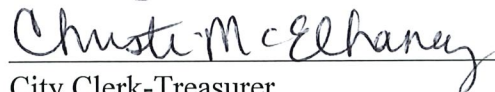
Andrew Rensberger

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Attest:

  
Christi McElhane  
City Clerk-Treasurer

Presented by me to the Mayor for approval or veto, this 26 day of March, 2024.

  
Christi McElhane  
City Clerk-Treasurer

This Resolution having been adopted by the Common Council and presented to me is [APPROVED or VETOED], this 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024.

  
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Mayor of the City of Huntington