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(Original Signature of Member)

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 49, United States Code, to establish a local rail facilities and safety program to award grants for freight capacity projects, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. LARSEN of Washington introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to establish a local rail facilities and safety program to award grants for freight capacity projects, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “At-Grade Crossing En-
5 hancement Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. LOCAL RAIL FACILITIES AND SAFETY.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 201 of title 49, United
3 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
4 lowing:

5 **“§ 20168. Local rail facilities and safety program**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Transpor-
7 tation, acting through the Administrator of the Federal
8 Railroad Administration, shall establish a local rail facili-
9 ties and safety program (in this section referred to as the
10 ‘Program’) to mitigate the impacts of railroad operations
11 in local communities through improvements to highway-
12 rail grade crossings, rail line relocation and improvement
13 projects, and training and technical assistance to local
14 governments.

15 “(b) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying out the Pro-
16 gram, the Secretary may award grants to eligible entities
17 for freight capacity projects (as described under sub-
18 section (e)).

19 “(c) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for a grant under
20 the Program, an eligible entity shall submit to the Sec-
21 retary an application in such form, at such time, and con-
22 taining such information as the Secretary determines is
23 appropriate.

24 “(d) PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting
25 the recipients of grants for freight capacity projects under
26 the Program, the Secretary shall consider—

1 “(1) the extent to which a proposed project—

2 “(A) alleviates the impacts of rail oper-
3 ations on local neighborhoods or urbanized
4 areas;

5 “(B) will result in clearly-defined public
6 benefits;

7 “(C) contributes to increasing the competi-
8 tiveness and state of good repair of short line
9 railroads;

10 “(D) enhances safety at critical highway-
11 rail grade crossings;

12 “(E) is compatible with local land use, eco-
13 nomic development, and transportation plans
14 and objectives;

15 “(F) includes equitable participation from
16 other beneficiaries in the project’s financing, in-
17 cluding the extent to which the project will le-
18 verage private or local government investments;
19 and

20 “(G) will increase the reliability and resil-
21 ience of the nation’s freight system; and

22 “(2) the past performance of the recipient and
23 other beneficiaries of the project in developing and
24 delivering rail projects.

1 “(e) FREIGHT CAPACITY PROJECTS.—A grant
2 awarded under the Program may be used for the following:

3 “(1) A capital project to mitigate the impacts
4 of rail infrastructure and operations on a local com-
5 munity, including—

6 “(A) rail line relocation and improvement;
7 and

8 “(B) improving the safety of, or elimi-
9 nating hazards at, a highway-rail grade cross-
10 ing.

11 “(2) A capital project to improve short-line rail-
12 road infrastructure.

13 “(3) Training and technical assistance to help
14 local governments better understand how to coordi-
15 nate with railroad carriers on—

16 “(A) operations and safety issues; and

17 “(B) how to integrate railroad issues into
18 land use and transportation planning processes.

19 “(f) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant may be used to pay
20 all or a portion of the subsidy and administrative costs
21 of projects eligible for Federal credit assistance under the
22 Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of
23 1976 (45 U.S.C. 801 et seq.) for a capital project to im-
24 prove short-line railroad infrastructure.

1 “(g) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section,
2 the term ‘eligible entity’ means each of the following:

3 “(1) One or more States.

4 “(2) An Interstate Compact.

5 “(3) A local government.

6 “(4) A tribal government.

7 “(5) One or more metropolitan planning organi-
8 zations.

9 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
10 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
11 \$300,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through
12 2021.”.

13 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The analysis for
14 chapter 201 of title 49, United States Code, is amended
15 by adding at the end the following new item:

“20168. Local rail facilities and safety program.”.