

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Transportation

BILL: CS/SB 1310

INTRODUCER: Transportation Committee and Senator Rodriguez

SUBJECT: Railroad Crossing Safety

DATE: February 10, 2026 REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Johnson	Vickers	TR	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2. _____	_____	ATD	_____
3. _____	_____	FP	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 1310 requires the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to conduct a statewide study on the use of advanced detection and monitoring systems at public railroad-highway grade crossings. Related to this study, the bill provides legislative findings and intent, defines terms, specifies requirements for the study, and authorizes FDOT to consult with specified entities.

The bill requires FDOT to submit a report of its findings and any recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2026.

FDOT may incur costs to conduct the study required in the bill. See Section V., Fiscal Analysis Statement for details.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

In 2025, based on preliminary Federal Railroad Administration data, Florida ranked third nationally in highway-rail grade crossing collisions with 120 collisions, 22 deaths, and 48

injuries.¹ Florida also ranked fourth nationally in the total railroad trespassing casualties with 66 casualties, 51 of which were deaths.²

According to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), 88 percent of Highway-Rail Grade Crossing accidents that occurred between 2013-2022 involved stopping on the crossing, going around gates, not stopping, stopping then proceeding, or going through gates.³

Regulation of Railroad Crossings

Florida law defines the term “public railroad-highway grade crossing” to mean a location at which a railroad track is crossed at grade by a public road.⁴ As of 2025, Florida has 3,565 public at-grade rail crossings.⁵ FDOT regulates public railroad-highway grade crossings, including the issuance permits to open or close such crossings.⁶

Railroad companies must exercise reasonable care for the safety of motorists whenever its track crosses a highway. The railroad company is responsible for erecting and maintaining crossbuck grade-crossing warning signs at all public or private railroad-highway grade crossings.⁷

Upon reasonable notice from FDOT, every railroad company maintaining a public railroad-highway grade crossing must install, maintain, and operate traffic control devices at such crossing to warn motorists of approaching trains.⁸

The governmental entity with jurisdiction over the highway or street that crosses the railroad must install and maintain advance railroad warning signs and pavement markings.⁹

Persons approaching a railroad-highway grade crossing must exercise reasonable care for their own safety, the safety of railroad crews, and the safety of train or vehicle passengers.¹⁰

¹ Operation Lifesaver, *Collisions & Fatalities by State, Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Collisions - Top 25 States*, <https://oli.org/track-statistics/collisions-fatalities-state> (last visited February 4, 2026).

² Operation Lifesaver, *Trespassing Casualties by State, Top 25 States Ranked by Total Trespass Casualties*, <https://oli.org/track-statistics/trespassing-casualties-state> (last visited February 4, 2026).

³ FDOT, Florida Rail Safety Coalition, <https://www.fdot.gov/rail/programs/florida-rail-safety-coalition> (last visited February 3, 2026).

⁴ Section 335.141(1)(b), F.S..

⁵ Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Office of Freight and Rail, *Opening – Closure Program*. <https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/rail/programs/openclose/fro-rail-crossing-opening-and-closure-program-gameboard.pdf> (last visited February 3, 2026).

⁶ Section 335.141(1)(a), F.S.

⁷ Section 351.03(1). F.S. Such warning signs must comply with FDOT’s uniform system of traffic control devices.

⁸ Section 335.141(2)(b), F.S.

⁹ Section 351.03(2), F.S.

¹⁰ *Id.*

FDOT Rail Safety Initiatives

In 2024, FDOT established the Florida Rail Safety Coalition (FRSC) to enhance public rail safety. The FRSC consists of rail industry partners at local, state, and federal levels, including but not limited to subject matter experts and FDOT team members.¹¹

The FRSC has determined that driver and pedestrian behavior is the most critical and urgent rail safety issue.¹² In response, FRSC and FDOT have launched various safety-related campaigns such as the Be Rail Smart initiative, which focuses on accident prevention and educating the public about rail crossing safety awareness and proper procedure when approaching a rail crossing.¹³

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 351.03, F.S., to require FDOT to conduct a railroad crossing safety technology study.

Legislative Findings and Intent

The bill provides legislative findings and intent that improving safety at railroad crossings is critical to protecting the lives of pedestrians, motorists, railway workers, and the general public. Advanced detection and monitoring systems using technologies such as sensors, high-resolution camera, and data analytics may provide a reliable means to enhance situational awareness and reduce collisions at railroad crossings.

The bill also provides legislative intent to direct FDOT to study the technologies referenced above before considering any statewide requirements for their deployment.

Definitions

The bill defines the term “advanced detection monitoring system” to mean a system capable of detecting and classifying objects, such as pedestrians, vehicles, or other obstructions at or approaching a railroad crossing, using technologies including, but not limited to, sensors, cameras, and data analytics.

The bill defines the term “hazard assessment” to mean the process of analyzing detected objects or conditions to determine whether a potential safety risk exists at a railroad crossing.

The bill defines the term “public railroad-highway grade crossing” to have the same meaning as provided in s. 335.141(1)(b), F.S., defined above.

¹¹ FDOT, Florida Rail Safety Coalition, <https://www.fdot.gov/rail/programs/florida-rail-safety-coalition> (last visited February 3, 2026).

¹² FDOT, *Florida Rail Safety Coalition Presentation*, November 14, 2024, https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/rail/programs/florida-rail-safety-coalition/frsc-presentation_2024-11-14.pdf?sfvrsn=d9e88546_1 (last visited February 3, 2026).

¹³ FDOT, Be Rail Smart, <https://www.fdot.gov/agencyresources/be-rail-smart/> (last visited February 3, 2026).

Statewide Railroad Crossing Study

The bill requires FDOT to conduct a statewide study on the use of advanced detection and monitoring systems at public railroad-highway grade crossings. The bill requires the study to include, but is not limited to, an analysis of all of the following:

- Available and emerging advanced detection and monitoring technologies applicable to railroad crossings.
- The effectiveness of such technologies in improving safety outcomes, including collision prevention and hazard mitigation, based on available data from pilot programs, deployments in other jurisdictions, or academic research.
- Technological and operational considerations, including interoperability with existing railroad safety systems and operating protocols.
- Costs associated with the deployment of advanced detection and monitoring systems, including installation, operation, maintenance, and long-term lifecycle costs.
- Potential funding mechanisms, including federal funds, state funds, grants, or public-private partnerships.
- Criteria for identifying higher-risk railroad crossings where technologies may provide the greatest safety benefit.
- Legal, regulatory, and operational considerations related to the deployment and oversight of advanced detection and monitoring systems.
- The respective roles of the state, local governments, and railroad owners in the implementation of such systems.

Consultations

In conducting the study, the bill authorizes FDOT to consult with, as appropriate, any of the following:

- Railroad owners and railroad industry representatives.
- Local governments with jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings.
- Transportation safety experts and academic institutions.
- Federal agencies or national organizations with expertise in railroad safety.

Report to the Governor and Legislature

The bill requires FDOT, by December 1, 2026, to submit a report of its findings and any recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. FDOT's report may include policy recommendations for legislative consideration but may not recommend or require the mandatory installation or upgrade of railroad crossings.

Section 2 provides that this bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

FDOT will incur indeterminate costs in conducting the study required by the bill. However, this study should be accomplished using existing resources.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

The bill appears to use the terms “railroad crossing” and “public railroad-highway grade crossing” interchangeably.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 351.03 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Transportation on February 10, 2026:

The committee substitute removes the requirement that specified detection and monitoring systems be installed and maintained at new, updated, or modified public railroad highway grade crossings.

In its place, the committee substitute requires FDOT to study the use of advanced detection and monitoring systems at public railroad-highway grade crossings. FDOT must submit a report of its findings and any recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2026.

B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
