

By the Committee on Transportation; and Senator Rodriguez

596-02684-26

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to railroad crossing safety; creating
3 s. 351.38, F.S.; providing legislative findings and
4 intent; defining terms; requiring the Department of
5 Transportation to conduct a statewide study on the use
6 of advanced detection and monitoring systems at public
7 railroad-highway grade crossings; providing
8 requirements for such study; authorizing the
9 department to consult with certain persons and
10 entities in conducting the study; requiring the
11 department to submit a report to the Governor and the
12 Legislature by a specified date; providing
13 requirements for such report; providing an effective
14 date.

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16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18 Section 1. Section 351.38, Florida Statutes, is created to
19 read:

20 351.38 Railroad crossing safety technology study.-

21 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

22 (a) The Legislature finds that improving safety at railroad
23 crossings is critical to protecting the lives of pedestrians,
24 motorists, railway workers, and the general public. Advanced
25 detection and monitoring systems using such technologies as
26 sensors, high-resolution cameras, and data analytics may provide
27 a reliable means to enhance situational awareness and reduce
28 collisions at railroad crossings.

29 (b) The Legislature further finds that additional analysis

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30 is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness, feasibility, costs,
31 and implementation considerations of such systems.

32 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature to direct the
33 Department of Transportation to study the technologies
34 referenced in paragraph (a) before considering any statewide
35 requirements for their deployment.

36 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

37 (a) "Advanced detection and monitoring system" means a
38 system capable of detecting and classifying objects, such as
39 pedestrians, vehicles, or other obstructions at or approaching a
40 railroad crossing, using technologies including, but not limited
41 to, sensors, cameras, and data analytics.

42 (b) "Hazard assessment" means the process of analyzing
43 detected objects or conditions to determine whether a potential
44 safety risk exists at a railroad crossing.

45 (c) "Public railroad-highway grade crossing" has the same
46 meaning as provided in s. 335.141(1)(b).

47 (3) STUDY.—

48 (a) The Department of Transportation shall conduct a
49 statewide study on the use of advanced detection and monitoring
50 systems at public railroad-highway grade crossings in this
51 state.

52 (b) The study must include, but is not limited to, an
53 analysis of all of the following:

54 1. Available and emerging advanced detection and monitoring
55 technologies applicable to railroad crossings.

56 2. The effectiveness of such technologies in improving
57 safety outcomes, including collision prevention and hazard
58 mitigation, based on available data from pilot programs,

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59 deployments in other jurisdictions, or academic research.

60 3. Technical and operational considerations, including
61 interoperability with existing railroad safety systems and
62 operating protocols.

63 4. Costs associated with the deployment of advanced
64 detection and monitoring systems, including installation,
65 operation, maintenance, and long-term lifecycle costs.

66 5. Potential funding mechanisms, including federal funds,
67 state funds, grants, or public-private partnerships.

68 6. Criteria for identifying higher-risk railroad crossings
69 where such technologies may provide the greatest safety benefit.

70 7. Legal, regulatory, and operational considerations
71 related to the deployment and oversight of advanced detection
72 and monitoring systems.

73 8. The respective roles of the state, local governments,
74 and railroad owners in the implementation of such systems.

75 (4) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study, the department
76 may consult with, as appropriate, any of the following:

77 (a) Railroad owners and railroad industry representatives.

78 (b) Local governments with jurisdiction over public
79 railroad-highway grade crossings.

80 (c) Transportation safety experts and academic
81 institutions.

82 (d) Federal agencies or national organizations with
83 expertise in railroad safety.

84 (5) REPORT.—By December 1, 2026, the department shall
85 submit a report of its findings and any recommendations to the
86 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
87 House of Representatives. The report may include policy

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88 recommendations for legislative consideration, but may not
89 recommend or require the mandatory installation or upgrade of
90 railroad crossings.

91 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.