

By the Committee on Transportation; and Senator Rodriguez

596-02684-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to railroad crossing safety; creating s. 351.38, F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent; defining terms; requiring the Department of Transportation to conduct a statewide study on the use of advanced detection and monitoring systems at public railroad-highway grade crossings; providing requirements for such study; authorizing the department to consult with certain persons and entities in conducting the study; requiring the department to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; providing requirements for such report; providing an effective date.

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

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

351.38 Railroad crossing safety technology study.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

(a) The Legislature finds 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 such technologies as sensors, high-resolution cameras, and data analytics may provide a reliable means to enhance situational awareness and reduce collisions at railroad crossings.

(b) The Legislature further finds that additional analysis

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

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

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

(a) "Advanced detection and monitoring system" means 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.

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

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

(3) STUDY.—

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

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

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

2. The effectiveness of such technologies in improving safety outcomes, including collision prevention and hazard 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.