

This Document can be made available in alternative formats upon request

State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

H. F. No. 885

02/16/2015 Authored by Freiberg; Carlson; Hornstein; Dehn, R.; Nelson and others

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation Policy and Finance

1.1 A resolution

1.2 memorializing the Surface Transportation Board to require an environmental impact  
1.3 statement on construction of railroad connector track in Crystal, Minnesota, which  
1.4 permits an alternative routing of unit trains transporting oil products through the  
1.5 Twin Cities metropolitan area.

1.6 WHEREAS, BNSF Railway Company and Canadian Pacific railroad each own track that  
1.7 intersects in the city of Crystal, Minnesota, and have commenced a project to construct connector  
1.8 track at the site of the intersection; and

1.9 WHEREAS, such railroad connector track allows alternative routing of unit trains having a  
1.10 total length of over one mile and carrying volatile oil products currently transported through the  
1.11 Twin Cities metropolitan area; and

1.12 WHEREAS, resulting rerouting due to new railroad connector track provides a new  
1.13 transportation route for unit trains carrying volatile oil products, which poses numerous  
1.14 potentially negative safety and environmental effects in several cities, including Crystal, Golden  
1.15 Valley, Minneapolis, New Hope, and Robbinsdale; and

1.16 WHEREAS, such effects include potential blockage of multiple adjacent at-grade  
1.17 highway-rail crossings by a single unit train in the cities of Crystal and Robbinsdale, which  
1.18 can result in (1) drastically reduced response capabilities of emergency first responders such as  
1.19 firefighters and police due to long diversion of route, and (2) congestion; and

1.20 WHEREAS, such effects also include passage of unit trains directly adjacent to  
1.21 environmentally sensitive areas including parks, trails, and wetlands; and

1.22 WHEREAS, such effects also include noise and safety impacts to residences and businesses  
1.23 located adjacent to and near the track; and

2.1 WHEREAS, such effects also include an increased volume of freight rail transportation  
2.2 on a new route; and

2.3 WHEREAS, such effects also include potential eminent domain takings of property; and

2.4 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Transportation, Surface Transportation  
2.5 Board, is authorized under federal law to provide regulatory oversight of freight railroads; NOW,  
2.6 THEREFORE,

2.7 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it urges the Surface  
2.8 Transportation Board to order the BNSF Railway Company or the Canadian Pacific railroad to  
2.9 complete an environmental impact statement prior to acquiring land, completing final design,  
2.10 or commencing construction of the railroad connector track.

2.11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota is  
2.12 directed to prepare copies of this memorial and transmit them to the Chairman of the Surface  
2.13 Transportation Board, the President of the United States, the President and the Secretary of the  
2.14 United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives,  
2.15 and Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in Congress.