

- Charles D. Hunter
- Assistant Vice President, Government Affairs
- Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc, on behalf of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad
- Headquartered in Auburn, ME
- The date of the work session: April 30, 2025

The LD number & title: LD 1644 - An Act to Require Train Axle Bearing Sensors to Be Installed on Passenger Rail Lines

- Testifying against the bill

The St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad (SLR) operates from Auburn, ME to the Canadian border with Vermont. The SLR provides vital supply chain freight rail transportation to Maine businesses, including those that are not directly served by a rail freight siding, via transload and warehouse facilities. The SLR is a Class II short line railroad that does not currently operate any passenger services. In years past, the line has hosted various passenger rail services from ski trains to tour trains and excursions.

The bill before you today would require mandatory placement of "hot box" detectors at specific locations, based on 20-mile track sections. The SLR currently has wayside detectors installed, but at different spacings.

Due to the interstate transportation of rail freight, railroads are governed by the Federal Railroad Administration as well as other U.S. government agencies, such as the Surface Transportation Board. Individual states lack the ability to enact laws that are the authority of the federal government. Allowing individual states to formulate their own policies that impact interstate commerce would create a patch work of differing practices and impact transportation nationally. **Railroad preemption of state laws** is governed by the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act (ICCTA), which grants exclusive jurisdiction over rail transportation to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB). The ICCTA preempts state laws governing regulation of rail transportation. The STB has sweeping regulatory authority over railroad operations. The preemption provision balances national uniformity of laws and regulations with state-level regulation in railroad safety matters.

Should you have further questions or need additional information, please contact me.