

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 317

BY REPRESENTATIVE BAYHAM

TRANSPORTATION DEPT: Urges and requests that the Department of Transportation and Development to convene a diagnostic review team to evaluate the proposed reactivation of the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo Street Wharf

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to convene a
3 diagnostic review team to study any potential hazards of the increasing railroad
4 activity on the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo Street Wharf.

5 WHEREAS, Norfolk Southern Railway is a Class I freight railroad operating in the
6 Eastern United States, with key infrastructure that includes approximately a six mile rail
7 bridge on the Lake Pontchartrain Bridge; and

8 WHEREAS, the Alabo Street Wharf in New Orleans was originally a slaughterhouse
9 that was purchased by the Port of New Orleans to transport river and train cargo, including
10 lumber, copper, and sugar; and

11 WHEREAS, this rail corridor has been largely dormant for decades; and

12 WHEREAS, the Port of New Orleans has entered into a fifteen-year lease agreement
13 with Sunrise Foods International to convert the Alabo Street Wharf in the Lower Ninth
14 Ward, Holy Cross, and other St. Bernard Parish neighborhoods into a specialized terminal
15 for importing organic grain, transported by Norfolk Southern trains; and

16 WHEREAS, in 2026, there were multiple incidents involving Norfolk Southern trains
17 colliding with vehicles in Arabi, Louisiana; and

18 WHEREAS, on March 23, 2026, an eighteen-wheeler truck collided with a Norfolk
19 Southern train; and

1 WHEREAS, on April 7, 2026, a Norfolk Southern train collided with a vehicle,
2 leading to the closure of Judge Perez Drive and Patricia Street; and

3 WHEREAS, there are multiple incidents in Alabama involving Norfolk Southern
4 trains; and

5 WHEREAS, some tracks run within fifteen feet of the neighborhood residents's front
6 doors; and

7 WHEREAS, grain dust is an S-1 high-hazard classified material and can become
8 combustible under certain conditions and poses a potential environmental and safety hazard;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, residents surrounding these tracks argue there has been no recent
11 comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with this high-intensity industrial use of
12 these trains; and

13 WHEREAS, these tracks may pose a safety hazard due to their dangerous
14 infrastructure, including tight tracks and non-standard curves on narrow residential streets;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, R.S. 48:390 authorizes the secretary of the Department of
17 Transportation and Development to complete a study of all public railroad grade crossings
18 to establish priorities for improvement, relocation, or closure in compliance with federal
19 guidelines and requires the development of a prioritized plan for implementing railroad
20 grade crossing improvements, relocations or closures pursuant to the Railroad Highway
21 Crossing Program, 23 U.S.C. 130; and

22 WHEREAS, 23 CFR Part 646 outlines regulations for Federal-aid highway projects
23 involving railroad facilities, specifically focusing on safety improvements, crossing
24 elimination, insurance requirements, and cost-sharing between states and railroads; and

25 WHEREAS, there is a potential environmental and public safety issue arising out of
26 expansion of rail activity in this area.

27 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
28 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Transportation and
29 Development to convene a diagnostic review team to conduct a study to assess the potential

1 hazards of increasing activity on the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo
2 Street Wharf and potential ways to prevent any foreseeable harm to the community.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and
4 Development shall submit a written report detailing its findings to the House Committee on
5 Transportation, Highways and Public Works prior to January 1, 2027.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
7 secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 317 Original

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Bayham

Urges and requests that the Dept. of Transportation and Development (DOTD) create a diagnostic review team to study and assess the potential risks of the increasing railroad activity on the Norfolk Southern Railway originating at the Alabo Street Wharf and potential ways to prevent any foreseeable harm to the community. Requires the DOTD submit a written report detailing its findings to the House transportation committee before Jan. 1, 2027.