

**As Reported by the House Transportation and Public Safety  
Committee**

**125th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2003-2004**

**Sub. H. B. No. 247**

**Representatives T. Patton, Perry, Price, S. Patton, Schlichter, McGregor, Key,  
Reinhard, Widowfield**

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**A B I L L**

To enact sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code to authorize the establishment of railroad quiet zones by municipal corporations and townships.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 4955.41, 4955.42, 4955.43, 4955.44, 4955.45, 4955.46, and 4955.47 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

**Sec. 4955.41.** As used in sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code:

(A) "Railroad quiet zone" means a designated area including and adjacent to one or more consecutive public grade crossings that are equipped with automatic gates and lights that conform to the manual on uniform traffic control devices and for which one or more supplemental safety measures are implemented and used pursuant to sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code.

(B) "Supplemental safety measure" means a supplementary safety measure, and the guidelines for the use and operation of that measure, that are prescribed in 49 C.F.R. 222.41(a) and (e)

and Appendix (A), as set forth in 65 F.R. 2230 to 2270.

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**Sec. 4955.42.** (A) A municipal corporation or township may establish within its jurisdiction one or more railroad quiet zones implementing and using one or more supplemental safety measures, through the enactment or adoption, after the effective date of initial regulations adopted pursuant to the "Swift Rail Development Act," Pub. L. No. 103-440, 108 Stat. 4615, 49 U.S.C. 20153, of an ordinance or resolution authorizing each zone and subject to public utilities commission approval under this section.

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(B)(1) Following enactment of an ordinance or resolution under division (A) of this section, the municipal corporation or township shall send a detailed written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to each railroad operating over a public grade crossing within the quiet zone. The notice shall request the railroad to give a written reply that includes its comments about the quiet zone and details any concerns the railroad has with any aspect of the quiet zone. The notice shall inform the railroad that if the municipal corporation or township does not receive the railroad's written reply within sixty days of the date of delivery of the notice, the municipal corporation or township is permitted to submit its application for approval of the quiet zone to the commission without the railroad's written reply and inform the commission that it provided the written notice as required by this section but that the railroad did not reply in a timely manner.

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(2) The municipal corporation or township then may file with the commission an application for commission approval of the railroad quiet zone authorized pursuant to the ordinance or resolution. The application shall be in such form and contain such information as the commission specifies. All applications also shall include all of the following:

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(a) The written reply described in division (B)(1) of this section, if any, from each railroad operating over a public grade crossing located within the quiet zone. If there is a written reply and it contains concerns that the railroad has about any aspect of the quiet zone, the municipal corporation or township shall include a written statement explaining how it will meet those concerns. 50  
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(b) A written statement from the federal railroad administration, stating that the agency has no objection to the establishment of the quiet zone; 57  
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(c) If a municipal corporation or township makes application under this division and wishes to pay all or part of the cost of the installation or maintenance of supplemental safety measures at a highway grade crossing located within the quiet zone in an adjoining municipal corporation or township, a written statement from the adjoining municipal corporation or township agreeing to that arrangement; 60  
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(d) A list of the private grade crossings, if any, that are located within the quiet zone, and a description of how the municipal corporation or township will ensure the safety of those who utilize those private grade crossings if the commission approves the quiet zone. 67  
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(3) Any combination of municipal corporations and townships may file a joint application for commission approval of quiet zones within their respective jurisdictions. 72  
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(C) Upon the filing of an application under division (B) of this section, the commission shall authorize a limited period for the filing of comments by any party regarding the application. After considering any such comments and only by order issued after the effective date of initial regulations adopted pursuant to the "Swift Rail Development Act," Pub. L. No. 103-440, 108 Stat. 4615, 75  
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49 U.S.C. 20153, the commission may approve the application, approve it with conditions, or reject the application. If the application is complete and otherwise meets all the requirements of this section, the commission shall approve the railroad quiet zone if the commission finds that instituting the proposed quiet zone will increase the overall safety of the rail line for the public and that the supplemental safety measures proposed for each public crossing included in the zone comply with the guidelines for the use and operation of those measures as set forth in Appendix (A) of 65 F.R. 2230 to 2270 and are appropriate and adequate for the crossing. If the commission disapproves all or part of an application as to a particular crossing, the commission's order shall state the findings and reasons for disapproval. Nothing in this section precludes the subsequent filing of a substantially modified application by the municipal corporation or township.

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The commission shall reject an application that does not include the documents described in divisions (B)(2)(a), (b), and, if applicable, (B)(2)(c) and (d) of this section. If the application includes a written reply and a written statement described in division (B)(2)(a) of this section, the commission shall reject the application if the commission finds that the statement from the municipal corporation or township does not adequately address the concerns of the railroad contained in the railroad's written reply. If the application includes a statement described in division (B)(2)(d) of this section, the commission shall reject the application if the commission finds that the application does not adequately address the issue of the safety of those persons who will utilize the private grade crossings located within the quiet zone if the commission approves its creation.

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**Sec. 4955.43.** (A) At least ninety days prior to the date of

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first operation of a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to  
section 4955.42 of the Revised Code, the municipal corporation or  
township shall provide detailed, written notice of the established  
zone by certified mail, return receipt requested, to each railroad  
operating over a public grade crossing included in the zone, the  
highway or traffic control authority or law enforcement authority  
having responsibility for control of vehicular traffic at the  
crossings, the public utilities commission, the director of public  
safety, and the associate administrator for safety for the federal  
railroad administration.

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(B) For each railroad quiet zone established pursuant to  
section 4955.42 of the Revised Code, the commission shall issue an  
order expressly prohibiting any engineer or other person in charge  
of a locomotive from sounding any locomotive whistle, horn, bell,  
or other audible warning device within the distance of each public  
crossing in the zone, as that distance is designated in the order  
of the commission.

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**Sec. 4955.44.** (A) On and after the date of first operation of  
a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to section 4955.42 of  
the Revised Code, divisions (B)(1) and (2) of section 4955.32 and  
division (A)(2) of section 4999.04 of the Revised Code do not  
apply with respect to a public or private grade crossing included  
in the zone.

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(B) The establishment of a railroad quiet zone pursuant to  
sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code does not preclude  
the sounding of a locomotive whistle, horn, bell, or other audible  
device by an engineer or other person in charge of the locomotive  
to address a perceived potential for injury, death, or loss to  
person or property, as determined by the sole judgment of the  
engineer or other person.

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(C) The commission may suspend summarily the operation of a quiet zone established pursuant to section 4955.42 of the Revised Code if the commission, through any source, obtains sufficient, credible evidence showing that a condition at a public grade crossing located within a quiet zone has changed to such an extent that, even with the continuing existence of the supplemental safety measures at the crossing, the quiet zone no longer qualifies as such under federal law or the commission determines that public safety is otherwise compromised at the crossing. Within fifteen days following the quiet zone suspension date described in this division, the commission shall hold a hearing in the general vicinity of the quiet zone in question to determine whether the quiet zone suspension should be lifted or continued, or whether commission approval of the quiet zone should be rescinded and the quiet zone eliminated.

**Sec. 4955.45.** (A) Each municipal corporation or township that has established a railroad quiet zone pursuant to sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code shall submit a report to the commission every three years after the date of first operation of the zone. The report shall be in such form and contain such information as the commission shall prescribe by rule, including, but not limited to, information on the number of traffic citations issued at the crossing, roadway traffic counts at the crossing, and changes to the crossing and roadway due to construction or improvements.

(B) Once every three years after the date of first operation of a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to section 4955.42 of the Revised Code, the public utilities commission shall inspect each public grade crossing in the zone and issue a report documenting the compliance of the zone with the commission order issued under that section. The commission also may inspect such a

crossing at any other time.

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(C) The commission at any time and by order, after notice and opportunity for the filing of comments, may require at a public grade crossing in a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to section 4955.42 of the Revised Code the implementation and use of such safety measures as it considers necessary and appropriate to ensure that safety measures are appropriate and adequate for the crossing or to ensure compliance with an order issued under division (C) of that section or with the guidelines for the use and operation of those measures as set forth in Appendix (A) of 65 F.R. 2230 to 2270, including to the extent such guidelines are applicable upon any adoption of regulations pursuant to the "Swift Rail Development Act," Pub. L. No. 103-440, 108 Stat. 4615, 49 U.S.C. 20153.

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Sec. 4955.46. (A) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the designation, establishment, design, construction, implementation, operation, repair, or maintenance of, or the lack of any of the preceding for, a public grade crossing included in a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code is a governmental function under section 2744.01 of the Revised Code.

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(B) Sections 9.85 to 9.87 and Chapter 2743. of the Revised Code specify the liability of this state or an officer or employee of this state with respect to a civil action brought for a violation of any provision of sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code or any order issued under those sections. As used in this division, "state" has the same meaning as in section 2743.01 of the Revised Code, and "officer or employee" has the same meaning as in section 9.85 of the Revised Code.

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(C) Nothing in sections 4955.41 to 4955.47 of the Revised Code obligates or requires the payment by a railroad of any part

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of the costs of establishing or maintaining such a railroad quiet zone. 204  
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(D) If, prior to the creation of a railroad quiet zone, a railroad is paying any part of the maintenance costs of a railroad grade crossing protective device then in existence at a railroad grade crossing located within the quiet zone, the railroad shall continue to pay those maintenance costs after the approval by the commission of the quiet zone, but the railroad is not required to pay any of the additional costs associated with the installation or maintenance of any protective device installed thereafter at the railroad grade crossing due to the creation of the quiet zone. 206  
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(E) No money appropriated to the public utilities commission that is to be used to pay the costs of measures taken to increase the safety of the traveling public at a public railroad grade crossing shall be diverted from such use after the effective date of this section to pay any of the costs associated with the establishment of a railroad quiet zone, including money in the grade crossing protection fund created by section 4907.472 of the Revised Code. 215  
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**Sec. 4955.47.** No railroad company and no employee or agent of the company shall be charged, or is liable in damages to person or property, for any failure to sound an audible warning by whistle, horn, bell, or other audible warning device at a public or private grade crossing equipped in accordance with division (B)(2) of section 4955.32 of the Revised Code or located in a railroad quiet zone established pursuant to section 4955.42 of the Revised Code or in a jurisdiction in which such sounding is restricted or prohibited by law. 223  
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**Section 2.** Notwithstanding division (A) of section 4955.42 of the Revised Code as enacted by this act, demonstration quiet zones may be established after the effective date of this act but prior 232  
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to the effective date of initial federal regulations described in 235  
that division. Only the following portions of railroad lines are 236  
eligible to have demonstration quiet zones established on them: 237

(A) The Chicago Line of the Norfolk Southern Corporation, 238  
from the point where that line enters the municipal corporation of 239  
Brook Park in the north and ending where the line exits the 240  
municipal corporation of North Ridgeville in the west. 241

(B) The Short Line of the CSX Railroad, from the point where 242  
that line enters the municipal corporation of Brooklyn in the east 243  
and ending where the line exits the municipal corporation of 244  
Olmsted Falls in the south. 245

(C) The Old B&O Line of the CSX Railroad, from the point 246  
where that line enters the municipal corporation of Brooklyn in 247  
the east and ending where the line exits the municipal corporation 248  
of Strongsville in the west. 249

Except as provided in this section, sections 4955.41 to 250  
4955.47 of the Revised Code as enacted by this act apply to all 251  
demonstration quiet zones created pursuant to this section. 252