

2025 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2061

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

SB 2061
1/9/2025

Relating to railroad crossings.

10:15 a.m. Chairman Clemens opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Clemens, Vice Chairman Cory, Senator Hogan, Senator Klein, Senator Paulson, Senator Rummel.

Discussion Topics:

- Railroad crossing safety measures

10:15 a.m. Chad Orn, Deputy Direction of Planning for NDDOT, testified in favor and submitted testimony #28114.

10:33 a.m. Senator Rummel moved a Do Pass.

10:33 a.m. Senator Paulson seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Jerry Klein	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Cory will carry the bill.

10:34 a.m. Chairman Clemens adjourned the meeting.

Chance Anderson, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2061 ([25.8045.01000](#))

Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING), and be placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.



Transportation

Senate Bill No. 2061**Senate Transportation Committee**

Fort Totten Room | January 9, 2025, 10:15 a.m.

Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning

Good morning, Chairperson and members of the Committee. I'm Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to introduce and provide supporting testimony for SB 2061.

SB 2061 clarifies the NDDOT director's authority to designate "Exempt" rail crossings for the purpose of not requiring certain vehicles to stop at rail crossings. Currently, unless a track is abandoned or discontinued and signed, certain trucks and school buses must stop at all highway-rail grade crossings to ensure a train or other rail equipment is not approaching.

In this case, federal regulations are less restrictive than North Dakota law. State law limits designation of exempt crossings to those that are abandoned or discontinued, while federal regulations allow designation of exempt crossings also at an industrial or spur line railroad grade crossing that is open to train traffic.

Some of the most dangerous situations on highways are unexpected stops by other vehicles. Therefore, at certain high-traffic crossings, the NDDOT may spend over a million dollars to install additional pull-out lanes. These lanes allow those vehicles that are required to stop to do so outside the mainline or high-speed traffic. However, in a few places, these high-traffic roadways intersect with railroad crossings that have extremely low-volume train activity, sometimes fewer than one train per day. Given the high traffic, these crossings generally already have railroad crossing arms installed as an added safety feature. In some cases, it would be a more efficient use of funding and potentially safer to simply mark these active crossings "Exempt" to reduce the risk of rear-end collisions at these crossings rather than spend money installing pull-out lanes.

Most highway-rail grade crossing improvements are determined by a field diagnostic team made up of NDDOT, the local road authority if not on a state highway, the operating railroad, and other interested partners (e.g., school district, city with zoning authority, track owner – such as an elevator, etc.). If SB 2061 passes it would provide another safety improvement option that the field diagnostic team could consider when reviewing at-grade highway-rail crossings.

The NDDOT recommends a "do pass" vote on SB 2061. This concludes my testimony. Thank You.

2025 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2061

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Room JW327E, State Capitol

SB 2061
3/6/2025

A bill relating to railroad crossings.

9:01 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Frelich, Hendrix, Johnston, Kasper, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Schatz
Members Absent: Representatives Finley-DeVille, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Exemption of railroad crossings
- Modes of transit

9:03 a.m. Chad Orn, Deputy Director for Planning, ND DOT, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39007.

9:11 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the hearing.

9:12 a.m. Representative Christianson moved a Do Pass.

9:12 a.m. Representative Morton seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	Y
Representative Ty Dressler	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	AB
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	AB
Representative Mike Schatz	Y

9:13 a.m. Motion passed 12-0-2.

9:13 a.m. Representative Christianson will carry the bill.

9:13 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the meeting.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2061 ([25.8045.01000](#))

Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2061 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

**Senate Bill No. 2061****House Transportation Committee**

Room 327E | March 6, 2025, 9 a.m.

Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning

Good morning, Chairperson and members of the Committee. I'm Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to introduce and provide supporting testimony for SB 2061.

SB 2061 clarifies the NDDOT director's authority to designate "Exempt" rail crossings for the purpose of not requiring certain vehicles to stop at rail crossings. Currently, unless a track is abandoned or discontinued and signed, certain trucks and school buses must stop at all highway-rail grade crossings to ensure a train or other rail equipment is not approaching.

In this case, federal regulations are less restrictive than North Dakota law. State law limits designation of exempt crossings to those that are abandoned or discontinued, while federal regulations allow designation of exempt crossings also at an industrial or spur line railroad grade crossing that is open to train traffic.

Some of the most dangerous situations on highways are unexpected stops by other vehicles. Therefore, at certain high-traffic crossings, the NDDOT may spend over a million dollars to install additional pull-out lanes. These lanes allow those vehicles that are required to stop to do so outside the mainline or high-speed traffic. However, in a few places, these high-traffic roadways intersect with railroad crossings that have extremely low-volume train activity, sometimes fewer than one train per day. Given the high traffic, these crossings generally already have railroad crossing arms installed as an added safety feature. In some cases, it would be a more efficient use of funding and potentially safer to simply mark these active crossings "Exempt" to reduce the risk of rear-end collisions at these crossings rather than spend money installing pull-out lanes.

Most highway-rail grade crossing improvements are determined by a field diagnostic team made up of NDDOT, the local road authority if not on a state highway, the operating railroad, and other interested partners (e.g., school district, city with zoning authority, track owner – such as an elevator, etc.). If SB 2061 passes it would provide another safety improvement option that the field diagnostic team could consider when reviewing at-grade highway-rail crossings.

The NDDOT recommends a "do pass" vote on SB 2061. This concludes my testimony. Thank You.