



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

COMMISSIONER JIM WRIGHT

June 05, 2023

The Honorable John Cornyn
U.S. Senator for Texas
Hart Senate Office Building 517
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
U.S. Senator for Texas
Russell Senate Office Building 167
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Cruz,

As an elected Commissioner of the Railroad Commission of Texas, the state agency with primary jurisdiction over the oil and natural gas industry, pipeline safety, coal and uranium surface mining, natural gas utilities, and the LP-gas industry, I write to express my concerns with S.576, *the Railway Safety Act of 2023*, as reported out of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

As reported, the bill's overreliance on administration rulemaking, particularly with respect to train length and operational restrictions of hazardous materials, could unnecessarily impair the transportation of American-made energy and subject this vital industry to the overzealous whims of an administration with a history of placating the green movement and limiting transportation options for domestically produced energy.¹²³

As you know, a third of our state's economy is dependent on the production, transportation, and refining of oil and natural gas products. Texas accounts for over 40% of U.S. oil production, 25% of natural gas production, and importantly, 32% of all U.S. refining capacity is located within Texas. Due in no small part to the Texas oil and gas industry, the U.S. has not only achieved energy independence, but is now a net exporter of energy products across the globe.

With 96% of the products we use every day made with or from oil and natural gas, the American public has greatly benefited from increased domestic production. Our energy independence has broadly protected U.S. consumers from experiencing the worst of recent global inflation, particularly in the energy sector. Additional restrictions on the transportation of these materials will undoubtedly lead to higher costs for consumers.

¹ [Executive Order 13990 Sec. 6. Revoking the March 2019 Permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline](#)

² "Today In Energy: Natural Gas Interstate Pipeline Capacity Additions Decrease in 2021." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, 24 Feb. 2022, www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=55699.

³ "Today In Energy: The Least U.S. Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Capacity on Record Was Added in 2022." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, 2 Mar. 2023, www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=55699.

I ask you to refrain from supporting the Railway Safety Act of 2023 until additional guardrails to protect our energy supply chain are included in the legislation. Improving railway safety and ensuring adequate transportation options for U.S. domestic energy production are not mutually exclusive goals. It is my hope that you and your colleagues can adopt an alternative course that increases safety and protects consumers from higher energy costs.

Thank you for your service to Texas and our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Wright", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jim Wright
Commissioner
Railroad Commission of Texas