



Board Report

File #: 2026-0160, **File Type:** Federal Legislation / State Legislation (Position)

Agenda Number: 24.

REVISED
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2026

SUBJECT: SENATE BILL 667

ACTION: ~~OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED~~ SEEK AMENDMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT the following staff recommended position:

SB 667 (Archuleta) - Railroads: Safety. Wayside Detectors. As amended January 22, 2026. -
~~OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED~~ SEEK AMENDMENTS

ISSUE

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors adopt an ~~OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED~~ position on Senate Bill 667, as amended on January 22, 2026.

BACKGROUND

SB 667 would require railroad corporations to install wayside detectors at specified intervals along California rail tracks serving freight trains. The bill also establishes penalties for violations of the bill's provisions and requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to enforce those penalties. Specifically, the bill would:

- Define a wayside detection system as an electronic device or series of connected devices that scans passing freight trains and their component equipment and parts for defects.
- Require a railroad corporation to install these wayside detectors adjacent to tracks used by freight rail at the following intervals: class I railroads: every 10 miles; class II railroads: every 25 miles; and class III railroads: every 35 miles.
- Prohibit freight trains from travelling faster than 10 miles per hour on tracks that do not have compliant wayside detectors.
- Require the CPUC to adopt rules to implement this bill.

This bill is co-sponsored by three different union groups and was brought forward in response to the 2023 Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

DISCUSSION

SB 667 is a two-year bill first introduced in the Legislature on February 20, 2025. The bill's first committee hearing in April was canceled at the request of the author, with Senator Archuleta choosing to bring back the legislation in January of 2026, passing out of the Senate before the two-year bill deadline of January 31.

SB 667 has the potential to impact Metro operations in two distinct ways: (1) the cost to implement wayside detector system equipment on Metro-owned right-of-way (ROW) and (2) the impacts to Metrolink service if freight corporations are slow in complying or do not comply. There are also potential downstream impacts to the region's economic competitiveness resulting from a downgrade of our goods movement network.

The bill does not clearly specify which agency would be responsible for implementing these systems. If Metro is required to implement them, the agency would need to install and maintain wayside detector equipment along its right-of-way and submit an implementation plan to the CPUC. Alternatively, if Metrolink is responsible for implementing the system on track owned by Metro, the cost would likely still fall to Metro, particularly for the Antelope Valley Line (AVL), which is fully owned by Metro.

The cost of installing and maintaining a wayside detector system on Metro-owned ROW is still being analyzed, with impacts expected to be millions of dollars. The greater concern is the Metrolink impacts, as the system operates on freight tracks except for Metro-owned ROW (Antelope Valley Line [AVL] and San Bernardino Line [SBL]). Metro owns 150 miles of ROW on these two lines. The bill's remedy for failure to comply is to reduce freight speeds to 10mph. If the railroads choose not to comply, their operations will degrade, but the cascading impact on Metrolink operations would be significant, particularly on the freight-owned ROW on which Metrolink operates (Orange County Line, San Bernardino Line, 91/Perris Valley Line, and Ventura County Line). The impacts would be less of a problem for Metrolink service (AVL/SBL) on Metro-owned ROW, but would still damage service by reducing frequencies, on-time performance, and reliability across the interconnected rail system.

Metrolink is also opposed to SB 667 due to concerns regarding unfunded installation and maintenance costs and potential operational disruptions on shared freight and passenger rail corridors. Metrolink estimates installation costs of approximately \$300,000 per detector and significant ongoing maintenance expenses, with no funding provided in the bill. The California Transit Association (CTA) has also taken an oppose position, due to similar concerns regarding unfunded mandates and impacts on passenger rail service reliability.

Metro staff recommends amendments to the bill, as follows:

1. Ensure that, because the bill is intended to monitor freight rail, freight railroads are responsible for the funding, implementation, and maintenance of the required wayside detector systems.
2. Eliminate the automatic penalty of speed reduction for non-compliance by Class I freight railroads for shared use corridors on which passenger rail (e.g., commuter and intercity)

operates, given the anticipated impacts on passenger rail service that supports the state and regional policy goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Instead, staff recommends that the author consider a different penalty for non-compliance that will not harm public transportation.

For these reasons, staff recommends an OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED position on SB 667.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Safety is of utmost importance to Metro's planning and operations. As it relates to this legislation, while the intention is to improve safety, the actual benefits may not be realized unless there is a long-term commitment to maintain the devices for the useful life of the system. This will also have to include ongoing investment in replacement costs, in perpetuity, for the devices in order to maintain the system in a state of good repair.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The estimated financial impact of SB677 as currently written is significant that is why the staff is recommending oppose unless amended.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Staff recommendation supports Metro's equity platform. Supporting Metrolink by ensuring that trains are not delayed due to third party compliance issues means supporting Metrolink riders. 45% of Metrolink trips are commuter trips and degrading service would negatively impact those riders as they may need to seek alternate arrangements for transportation, placing undue burden on these populations.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT. The provisions in this bill are likely to cause VMT increase across the region as a result of slower freight operations if the freight railroads do not comply with the bill's requirements.

*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Staff recommendation supports strategic plan goal # 5.6: Metro will foster and maintain a strong safety culture by supporting the bill's overall goal of increased safety through the installation of these wayside detector systems.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

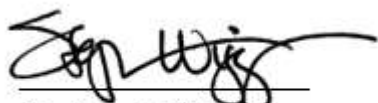
Staff considered a Work With Author position given the bill's intent to improve rail safety through the installation of wayside detector systems, which Metro supports. However, the bill creates significant potential cost exposure to Metro and operational impacts for passenger rail agencies without clearly identifying which entity would be responsible for installing, funding, and maintaining the required equipment on shared rail corridors. For these reasons, staff does not recommend a Work With Author position, as the amendments necessary to address Metro's concerns are fundamental to the structure and implementation of the bill.

NEXT STEPS

Should the Board decide to adopt an OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED position on the legislation, staff will communicate the Board's position to the author. Staff will work with the other impacted agencies and the California Transit Association, to ensure that impacts are minimized. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed as this issue is addressed throughout the legislative session.

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State Legislation SB 667 (Archuleta)

Executive Management Committee
March 19, 2026

Bill Summary

As amended on January 22, 2026, this bill would require railroad corporations to install wayside detectors at specified intervals on California rail tracks that serve freight trains. This bill also establishes penalties for this bill's violations and requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to enforce those penalties.

Specifically, the bill would:

Define a wayside detector system as an electronic device or series of connected devices that scans passing freight trains and their component equipment and parts for defects.

Require a railroad corporation to install these wayside detectors adjacent to tracks used by freight rail at the following intervals: class I railroads: every 10 miles; class II railroads: every 25 miles; and class III railroads: every 35 miles.

Prohibit freight trains from travelling faster than 10 miles per hour on tracks that do not have compliant wayside detectors.



Potential Impacts

SB 667 has the potential to impact Metro operations in two distinct ways:

- The cost to implement wayside detector system equipment on Metro-owned right-of-way (ROW)
- The impacts to Metrolink service if freight corporations are slow in complying or do not comply.
- There are also potential downstream impacts to the region's economic competitiveness resulting from a downgrade of our goods movement network.

Recommendation and Suggested Amendments

Recommendation:

ADOPT the following staff recommended position:

SB 667 (Archuleta) – Railroads: Safety. Wayside Detectors. As amended January 22, 2026. -
OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED

Suggested Amendments:

- Ensure that freight railroads are responsible for the funding, implementation, and maintenance of the required wayside detector systems.
- Eliminate the automatic penalty of speed reduction for non-compliance by Class I freight railroads for shared use corridors on which passenger rail (e.g., commuter and intercity) operates given the anticipated impacts on passenger rail service that supports the state and regional policy goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Instead, staff recommend the author consider a different penalty for non-compliance that will not result in harm to public transportation