

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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123rd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2007

Legislative Document

No. 626

H.P. 475

House of Representatives, February 8, 2007

An Act To Require Warning Lights at All Railroad Crossings

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative McKANE of Newcastle. (BY REQUEST)

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §7214**, as enacted by PL 1989, c. 398, §8, is amended to read:

3 **§7214. Signboards and warning lights at grade crossings; ringing of engine bells**

4 Every railroad corporation shall cause signboards with the words "Railroad Crossing"
5 distinctly painted on each side of the signboards, or as a minimum on one side if
6 signboards are placed facing ~~on-coming~~ oncoming traffic in each direction, in letters
7 plainly legible, to be placed and constantly maintained at the ~~side~~ sides of highways and
8 town ways where they are crossed at grade by those railroads, on posts or other
9 structures, in a position as to be easily seen by persons passing on those ways. Every
10 railroad corporation shall cause a warning light system to be placed facing oncoming
11 traffic in each direction and constantly maintained at the sides of highways and town
12 ways where they are crossed at grade by those railroads. Every corporation shall cause a
13 whistle and a bell of at least 35 pounds in weight to be placed on each locomotive used on
14 its railroad, and the whistles ~~shall~~ must be sounded as a warning beginning at a distance
15 of 990 feet, on standard or narrow gauge railroads, from all crossings of those ways on
16 the same level, unless the Department of Transportation, on petition of the corporation or
17 of the municipal officers or of 10 or more residents of any city or town in which the
18 crossing is located, after notice and hearing, ~~shall order~~ orders the sounding of the whistle
19 to be discontinued in any city or village until further order of the department. The bell
20 ~~shall~~ must be rung at a distance of 990 feet, on standard or narrow gauge railroads, from
21 grade crossings and be kept ringing until the engine has passed the crossings. On petition
22 of 10 or more residents of the State, after notice to the railroad corporation and a public
23 hearing, the department may in writing order the corporation to give additional warning
24 to travelers on those ways by requiring the sounding of the whistles or the ringing of the
25 bells at other places where the railroads cross the public ways other than at grade or run
26 contiguous to the ways, and the orders ~~shall~~ must have the same force and place the same
27 obligations on railroad corporations as when required under this section.

28 The Commissioner of Transportation may temporarily erect experimental signs at
29 certain grade crossings instead of the signboards with the words "Railroad Crossing," as
30 required in this section, for the purpose of conducting research for the development of
31 improved signs. The erection of experimental signs by the department at a particular
32 crossing ~~shall relieve~~ relieves the railroad company using that crossing from any liability
33 in damages, ~~which that~~ might otherwise arise against that company by the temporary
34 removal or temporary obliteration of the railroad company signboard required by this
35 section. The erection and removal of the temporary signs ~~shall~~ must be at the expense of
36 the department and the removal and reinstallation of signboards with the words "Railroad
37 Crossing" ~~shall~~ must also be at the expense of the department.

38 Nothing in this section prevents the department from making further rules for safety
39 at any crossing, including a private, temporary, farm or industrial crossing, as it ~~deems~~
40 considers expedient or necessary.

SUMMARY

1

2 This bill requires warning lights to be placed by the railroads at every railroad
3 crossing where the railroad crosses a public way.