

CITY OF NEW HAVEN, INDIANA

CONGRESSIONAL CONSTITUENT IMPACT BRIEF

PROLONGED RAILROAD CROSSING BLOCKAGES

New Haven, Indiana • September 2026

464	CONSTITUENT COMMENTS REVIEWED
7	CORE IMPACT AREAS IDENTIFIED Safety • Schools • Work • Healthcare • Access • Business • Predictability

THE ISSUE

A review of 464 constituent comments documents repeated concerns about prolonged and unpredictable railroad crossing blockages in New Haven. The comments describe impacts on **public safety, emergency response, children and schools, employment, healthcare, family responsibilities, traffic, neighborhood access, and local businesses.**

The comments do not reflect opposition to freight rail itself. Contributors repeatedly distinguish ordinary short train crossings from trains that stop or move very slowly while occupying public crossings for extended periods. One business owner specifically described the concern as trains that stop for an hour or more and cut off access to the downtown business corridor.

KEY FINDINGS

PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Residents repeatedly raise concerns that stopped trains can delay police, fire and EMS access, particularly when multiple crossings are blocked simultaneously.

CHILDREN & SCHOOLS

Comments report delayed school buses, late arrivals and pickups, and concerning reports of children going around, under or over stopped trains.

WORK & COMMUTING

Residents report being late for work, unable to reach work, losing productive time, and adding significant miles and fuel costs to routine trips.

HEALTHCARE & FAMILY

Comments describe missed or delayed doctor, dental, eye-care, hospital and assisted-living visits, as well as difficulty responding to family emergencies.

COMMUNITY ACCESS

Residents describe neighborhoods being effectively divided, with detours adding 15–30 minutes or more and some reporting no practical route around simultaneous blockages.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Business owners and commercial drivers report customer, employee, delivery and downtown-access impacts from extended stoppages.

PREDICTABILITY & INFORMATION

Residents often cannot tell whether a blockage will last minutes or hours, making work, school, childcare and appointments difficult to plan.

REPRESENTATIVE CONSTITUENT EXPERIENCES

The submissions include reports of a normal seven-minute commute becoming 30 minutes or more; a resident trying three different roads before finding a way across town and becoming late for a delivery; and a trip that normally takes about ten minutes each way becoming a 90-minute ordeal resulting in a missed medical appointment.

Residents also report situations in which several crossings are blocked at once, leaving limited alternatives. The recurring theme is not simply delay—it is **unpredictability combined with limited routes through the community.**

SOURCE NOTE

This brief summarizes the 464 constituent comments provided for review. Themes are presented qualitatively; no unsupported percentages or frequency estimates are assigned.

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WHAT CONSTITUENTS ARE ASKING CONGRESS TO CONSIDER

1. PROTECT EMERGENCY ACCESS

Evaluate procedures and infrastructure that preserve reliable routes for police, fire and EMS when railroad crossings are occupied.

2. REDUCE PROLONGED BLOCKAGES

Explore railroad operating practices, standards or accountability measures that could reduce excessively long occupancy of public crossings, consistent with applicable federal authority.

3. PROVIDE REAL-TIME INFORMATION

Support a reliable public notification system showing blocked crossings and, where feasible, expected clearance times.

4. MEASURE THE PROBLEM

Encourage systematic collection of crossing blockage frequency, duration, location, and simultaneous-blockage data.

5. PURSUE ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

Evaluate grade separation, overpasses, underpasses and other infrastructure improvements at locations with persistent impacts.

6. CONVENE THE STAKEHOLDERS

Bring together the railroad, City of New Haven, state transportation officials, emergency responders, schools and appropriate federal agencies.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A railroad crossing is part of a larger transportation network. When a train occupies a crossing for an extended period, the impact can propagate through the community: vehicles turn around, alternate roads become congested, school and work trips run late, deliveries are delayed, and emergency routes may become less direct.

The comments also describe cumulative effects. Residents who repeatedly encounter unpredictable blockages report changing how they travel, avoiding certain areas, spending additional money on fuel, and allowing substantially more time for routine trips.

BALANCED APPROACH

The constituent message is not “stop the trains.” It is: **keep trains moving when possible, keep roads accessible, protect emergency response, provide timely information, and pursue infrastructure that allows rail and community mobility to coexist safely.**

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST

NEW HAVEN RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS CONGRESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Bring the railroad and appropriate federal, state and local transportation authorities together to identify immediate operational improvements and long-term infrastructure solutions for recurring railroad crossing blockages in New Haven.

Priority: emergency access • crossing availability • real-time notification • data collection • grade-separation/infrastructure options

THE BOTTOM LINE

Residents want a community where freight can move without unnecessarily stopping the community itself. The 464 comments provide a substantial record of constituent experiences that merits coordinated attention from the railroad and transportation authorities at the local, state and federal levels.

Prepared from constituent comments submitted regarding railroad crossing impacts in New Haven, Indiana • 464 comments reviewed