HOUSE BILL No. 5854

May 20, 1992, Introduced by Reps. Bartnik, Hertel, Hoffman, DeMars, Nye, Kosteva, Olshove, Weeks, Wozniak, Niederstadt, Munsell, Dalman, DeLange, Bobier, Middleton, Horton and DeBeaussaert and referred to the Committee on Transportation.

A bill to amend the title and sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of Act No. 270 of the Public Acts of 1921, entitled "An act to promote the public safety and make more safe crossings of streets and highways with railroads and railways," being sections 469.1, 469.2, 469.3, 469.5, 469.8, 469.9, 469.10, 469.11, and 469.12 of the Michigan Compiled Laws; to add section 1a; and to repeal certain parts of the act.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

- 1 Section 1. The title and sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11,
- 2 and 12 of Act No. 270 of the Public Acts of 1921, being
- 3 sections 469.1, 469.2, 469.3, 469.5, 469.8, 469.9, 469.10,
- 4 469.11, and 469.12 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, are amended and
- 5 section 1a is added to read as follows:

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I TITLE

- 2 An act to promote the public safety and make more safe
- 3 crossings of streets and highways with railroads and railways; TO
- 4 PRESCRIBE THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF CERTAIN STATE AND LOCAL AGEN-
- 5 CIES AND OFFICERS; TO PROVIDE LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN
- 6 RECORDS; AND TO PRESCRIBE PENALTIES.
- 7 Sec. 1. (1) AS USED IN THIS ACT:
- 8 (A) "CROSSING" MEANS THE POINT AT WHICH ANY STANDARD GAUGE
- 9 RAILROAD TRACK INTERSECTS WITH ANY PUBLIC STREET OR HIGHWAY AT
- 10 GRADE.
- 11 (B) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE STATE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.
- 12 (C) "INDUSTRIAL FACILITY" MEANS A BUSINESS THAT UTILIZES
- 13 RAIL SERVICE AND THAT HAS PEDESTRIAN AND MOTORIZED TRAFFIC THAT
- 14 INTERSECTS WITH ANY STANDARD GAUGE RAILROAD TRACK.
- 15 (D) "PRIVATE CROSSING" MEANS THE POINT AT WHICH ANY STANDARD
- 16 GAUGE RAILROAD TRACK INTERSECTS WITH ANY PRIVATE ROAD OR
- 17 DRIVEWAY.
- 18 (E) "PUBLIC STREET OR HIGHWAY" MEANS AN IMPROVED THOROUGH-
- 19 FARE MAINTAINED BY A ROAD AUTHORITY THAT HAS BEEN DEDICATED AND
- 20 CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.
- 21 (F) "RAILROAD" MEANS A CARRIER OF PERSONS OR PROPERTY UPON
- 22 CARS OPERATED UPON STATIONARY RAILS. RAILROAD INCLUDES A PERSON,
- 23 PARTNERSHIP, CORPORATION, ASSOCIATION, OR TRUSTEE SO OPERATING
- 24 EITHER AS A COMMON CARRIER FOR HIRE OR A COMMON CARRIER FOR PRI-
- 25 VATE USE.

- 1 (G) "ROAD AUTHORITY" MEANS A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT HAVING THE 2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, AND MAINTENANCE OF 3 STREETS AND ROADS WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES.
- (2) The parties owning railroad tracks crossing any public 5 highway at grade shall improve, if necessary, and thereafter 6 maintain, renew, and repair all railroad roadbed, track, and 7 railroad culverts within the confines of the highway, and the 8 surfacing lying between the rails and for a distance outside the 9 rails of 1 foot beyond the end of the ties. , and the public 10 authorities THE ROAD AUTHORITY having jurisdiction over -such-11 THE PUBLIC STREET OR highway shall improve, if necessary, and 12 thereafter maintain, renew, and repair -all the -rest and 13 remainder of -said THE PUBLIC STREET OR highway. The space 14 between the rails and for a distance outside of the rails of 1 15 foot beyond the end of the ties shall be surfaced with a material 16 which shall be as durable as the adjacent PUBLIC STREET OR high-17 way surfacing, if reasonably practicable, and shall have minimum 18 qualifications not inferior to wooden planks, and shall be main-19 tained, as nearly as reasonably may be, in a condition as smooth 20 as that of the adjacent PUBLIC STREET OR highway. , and such 21 THE surfacing of planks or other material at all state trunk line 22 highways and county highways shall have a width of not less than 23 the width between the established curb lines, or, in the absence 24 of such curb lines, the width between the established shoulder 25 lines of the highway, but not less than 16 feet. The full cost 26 of maintaining and repairing all existing crossings shall be 27 borne by the respective parties responsible for the work as

- 1 herein provided IN THIS ACT. The cost of improving an existing
- 2 crossing, where such improvement is necessary, shall be borne
- 3 in the same manner as -herein- provided IN THIS ACT for mainte-
- 4 nance and repair. At any new crossing at grade or at any exist-
- 5 ing crossing at grade to be improved, any alteration in the
- 6 existing elevation of top of railroad track rails to provide a
- 7 satisfactory gradient shall be mutually determined by the
- 8 -highway ROAD and railroad authorities; but in case of failure
- 9 to agree, the Michigan public utilities commission is hereby
- 10 authorized to DEPARTMENT MAY establish such reasonable eleva-
- 11 tions after -due hearing -thereon- ON THE QUESTION.
- (3) The elevation of railroad track rails shall not be
- 13 altered as now existing across any improved state trunk line or
- 14 county highway without the approval of both railroad and
- 15 -highway ROAD authorities, -unless and except in the amount
- 16 ordered by the Michigan public utilities commission and no vari-
- 17 ation in such elevation of more than substantially 1 inch will be
- 18 allowable for track maintenance DEPARTMENT. Where the elevation
- 19 of track rails is agreed upon or authorized for purposes other
- 20 than to conform to the requirements of the adjacent highway as
- 21 now existing, the entire cost of both the work conducted by the
- 22 railroad company or companies and -highway ROAD authorities
- 23 shall be borne by the party requesting the change. The railroad
- 24 authorities shall not perform any work of any kind excepting
- 25 emergency and minor repairs on state trunk line and county high-
- 26 ways between the established curb lines, or, in the absence of
- 27 established curb lines, between the established lines of the

- 1 highway, without first notifying the -highway ROAD authorities
- 2 having jurisdiction over -such THE highway, and without first
- 3 providing and thereafter maintaining necessary barricades,
- 4 lights, -watchmen- WORKERS, and traffic detours.
- 5 SEC. 1A. (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ASSESS THE PHYSICAL CON-
- 6 DITIONS AND SAFETY NEEDS OF CROSSINGS OF RAILROAD TRACKS WITH
- 7 PUBLIC HIGHWAYS AND STREETS AND, BY ORDER, SHALL REQUIRE SUCH
- 8 ADJUSTMENTS OR IMPROVEMENTS, RELOCATIONS, CLOSURES, REMOVALS, OR
- 9 OTHER CHANGES AS MAY BE REASONABLY REQUIRED IN THE INTEREST OF
- 10 PUBLIC SAFETY. THE RAILROAD HAVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRACK
- 11 OR TRACKS IN THE CROSSING, AND THE ROAD AUTHORITY HAVING JURIS-
- 12 DICTION OF THE ROAD OR STREET SHALL BE GIVEN DUE NOTICE AND HAVE
- 13 THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD IN CROSSING INSPECTIONS AND IN HEARINGS TO
- 14 DETERMINE SUCH SAFETY MEASURES OR IMPROVEMENTS AS MAY BE
- 15 ORDERED.
- 16 (2) THE GRADE CROSSING RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT BE
- 17 ADMITTED AS EVIDENCE OR USED FOR ANY PURPOSE IN ANY ACTION FOR
- 18 DAMAGES OR LOSS GROWING OUT OF ANY MATTERS MENTIONED IN THOSE
- 19 RECORDS. HOWEVER, A FINAL ORDER OF THE DEPARTMENT APPROVING A
- 20 WARNING SYSTEM FOR A CROSSING SHALL BE ADMISSIBLE SOLELY AS EVI-
- 21 DENCE OF THE ADEQUACY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE CROSSING WARNING
- 22 SYSTEM.
- 23 (3) ORDERS OF THE DEPARTMENT NEED NOT SPECIFY THE DETAILS OF
- 24 THE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, OR RECONSTRUCTION OF A PHYSICAL GRADE
- 25 CROSSING UNLESS THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING A PARTICULAR CROSS-
- 26 ING SO REOUIRE. AN ORDER SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION TIME
- 27 REQUIRED FOR DESIGN, ACQUISITION OF MATERIALS, AVAILABILITY AND

- 1 OBTAINING OF FUNDING, CONSTRUCTION TIME INCLUDING SEASONABLE
- 2 DIFFICULTIES, AND THE VOLUME OF SIMILAR PROJECTS PENDING.
- 3 (4) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ORDER ANY TYPE OF GRADE CROSSING
- 4 SIGNS OR DEVICES AT PRIVATE CROSSINGS INCLUDING THOSE PRIVATE
- 5 CROSSINGS INSIDE INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES.
- 6 Sec. 2. The full cost of constructing a new highway over an
- 7 existing railroad, or of a new railroad track or tracks over an
- 8 existing highway, shall be borne by the party requesting -such-
- 9 THE crossing. Thereafter the terms of this act shall apply to
- 10 -such THE new crossing. In respect of state trunk line or
- 11 county highways at grade, the plans for -such THE crossing shall
- 12 be approved by both railroad and highway ROAD authorities. In
- 13 the event of IF THERE IS A failure to agree on the part of the
- 14 railroad authorities, the Michigan public utilities commission
- 15 DEPARTMENT shall settle the points of disagreement by the terms
- 16 of its order. The relocation of an existing crossing or the
- 17 establishment of a new crossing at which the adjacent public
- 18 highway grade crossing is completely and legally abandoned —
- 19 shall be constructed and the cost borne in the same manner as in
- 20 the case of a new crossing. Temporary crossings shall be con-
- 21 structed, maintained, and removed at the sole expense of the par-
- 22 ties requesting the same. Nothing in this act shall require any
- 23 railroad company or railroad companies to reconstruct, change, or
- 24 alter an existing crossing of a public highway with its railroad
- 25 tracks at grade unless and until the railroad company or rail-
- 26 road companies -shall improve -said THE crossing or the
- 27 -public ROAD authorities having jurisdiction -thereover OVER

- 1 THE CROSSING shall improve -said THE crossing in which event
- 2 each party shall notify the other in sufficient time in advance
- 3 so as to permit the other party to conform to -such THE
- 4 improvements. After the completion of -said improvements at
- 5 any such A crossing neither the grade of the top of the rails
- 6 of the railroad tracks or of the highway and its surfacing shall
- 7 be changed except by mutual agreement of the parties interested,
- 8 subject to limitations for track maintenance as specified in
- 9 section 2, but, in the event of IF THERE IS A failure to so
- 10 agree, then upon order of the Michigan public utilities
- 11 commission DEPARTMENT after due hearing. thereon: Provided,
- 12 That the highway THE ROAD authorities having jurisdiction over
- 13 -such THE highway, if they -deem CONSIDER such improvement nec-
- 14 essary, may request a railroad company or companies in writing to
- 15 improve any existing crossing at grade of -such- THE railroad or
- 16 railroads with any state trunk line or county highway, and, in
- 17 the event of such IF THE railroad company or companies refusing
- 18 so REFUSE to do SO, may make application to the Michigan public
- 19 utilities commission DEPARTMENT for such THE improvement.
- 20 and the commission THE DEPARTMENT, after due hearing,
- 21 -thereon shall determine the matters in dispute under this sec-
- 22 tion by order.
- 23 Sec. 3. The highway authorities— A ROAD AUTHORITY shall at
- 24 their ITS own expense furnish, renew, and maintain on the right
- 25 hand side of the highway approaching all crossings of highways
- 26 with railroad tracks, advance warning signs designed and
- 27 maintained as prescribed by the Michigan manual of uniform

- 1 traffic control devices and subject to revision as the -state
- 2 highway commission DEPARTMENT and the director of the department
- 3 of state police -deem CONSIDER necessary in the best interests
- 4 of public safety for highway traffic.
- 5 Sec. 5. Except as herein provided IN THIS ACT, at all
- 6 state trunkline and county highway crossings with railroad
- 7 tracks, the -highway authorities shall- ROAD AUTHORITY, at all
- 8 crossings of public highways with railroad tracks outside of the
- 9 corporate limits of cities and villages, at the equal expense of
- 10 THE railroad and highway authorities ROAD AUTHORITY, SHALL fur-
- 11 nish, renew and maintain on the right hand side of the highway
- 12 approaching the railroad tracks, and at a distance from the near-
- 13 est rail to be established by the railroad -authorities-
- 14 AUTHORITY, and from the center line of the highway to be estab-
- 15 lished by the -highway authorities ROAD AUTHORITY, standard
- 16 railroad crossing signs embodying a crossbuck design and provided
- 17 with the designation "railroad crossing tracks"
- 18 (insert number of tracks), indicating the actual number of tracks
- 19 to be crossed, and all signs EXCEPT THAT IF THERE IS ONLY 1
- 20 TRACK IN THE CROSSING, THE SIGN STATING THE NUMBER OF TRACKS MAY
- 21 BE OMITTED. SIGNS with this designation shall be provided with
- 22 reflector buttons or reflectorized with reflectorizing material
- 23 in accordance with Michigan state highway department
- 24 specifications. -Such- THESE signs shall conform to a design
- 25 prescribed by the -state highway commissioner DEPARTMENT and
- 26 shall be subject to such revision from time to time as the -state
- 27 highway commissioner DEPARTMENT may deem CONSIDER necessary in

- 1 the interests of public safety for highway traffic; but the cost
- 2 of any change or changes after the original installation, -as
- 3 herein provided, except in the case of renewals on account of
- 4 destruction or decay through lapse of time, shall be borne solely
- 5 by the -highway ROAD authorities. Nothing in this section -five
- 6 (5) shall be -so construed -as to require the railroad and
- 7 -highway ROAD authorities to replace existing railroad crossing
- 8 signs until -such THE existing railroad crossing signs need
- 9 replacement or renewal because of obsolescence, destruction, or
- 10 decay. The material of construction and the mounting of such
- 11 THE signs may be of timber provided that IF the essential fea-
- 12 tures of the signs conform to the requirements of the -state
- 13 highway commissioner DEPARTMENT. Such THESE railroad crossing
- 14 signs shall be located as nearly as may be in the same position
- 15 as would be specified for the location of flashing signals
- 16 approved by the state highway commissioner DEPARTMENT, and when
- 17 such flashing signals are provided or already existing, the rail-
- 18 road crossing signs shall be omitted or removed.
- 19 Sec. 8. (1) When in the discretion of the Michigan public
- 20 utilities commission DEPARTMENT the safety of the public -shall
- 21 hereafter require REQUIRES that some protection device or
- 22 improvement in existing devices be provided at a railway crossing
- 23 to warn of the approach of trains about to cross the highway, —it
- 24 shall be the duty of the Michigan public utilities commission and
- 25 it is hereby empowered to THE DEPARTMENT MAY order the railway
- 26 authorities owning the tracks of such crossings to provide
- 27 protection of a flashing light type equipped with a gong of

- 1 approved type at each signal which shall, unless otherwise agreed
- 2 upon by the highway authorities responsible for the maintenance
- 3 of the highway, be installed on the right hand side of the high-
- 4 way approaching the crossing from each direction on the near side
- 5 of and at a distance from the center line of the outside tracks
- 6 to be determined by the railway authorities and at a distance
- 7 from the center line of the highway and above the crown of the
- 8 roadway to be determined by the highway authorities responsible
- 9 for the maintenance of the highway IN THE FORM OF TRAFFIC SIG-
- 10 NALS, HALF OR FULL ROADWAY GATES OR MANUAL OR AUTOMATICALLY CON-
- 11 TROLLED FLASHING LIGHT SIGNALS, EQUIPPED WITH BACK-TO-BACK LIGHTS
- 12 AND WITH GONGS, AND WITH ADDITIONAL SUCH SIGNALS IN OVERHEAD OR
- 13 OTHER POSITIONS OR SUCH NEW OR INNOVATIVE SIGNALS OR GATES OR
- 14 AUDIBLE OR OTHER WARNING SYSTEMS OR DEVICES AS THE DEPARTMENT MAY
- 15 FIND TO BE REASONABLY REQUIRED BY SAFETY PURPOSES. THE PLACEMENT
- 16 OF SIGNALS, GATES, GONGS, AND OTHER ORDERED SAFETY SYSTEMS OR
- 17 DEVICES AT THE CROSSING SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RAIL-
- 18 ROAD COMPANIES OR OTHER PARTIES OWNING OR HAVING JURISDICTION
- 19 OVER THE TRACKS AS PLACEMENT IS RELATED TO THE CENTERLINE OF THE
- 20 OUTSIDE TRACK, AND PLACEMENT FROM THE ROAD OR STREET CENTERLINE
- 21 OR CROWN SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ROAD AUTHORITY HAVING
- 22 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ROAD OR STREET.
- 23 (2) All flashing light types of protection shall consist of
- 24 -two 8 inch diameter 2 lights NOT LESS THAN 8 INCHES IN DIAMETER
- 25 equipped with red lenses and reflectors mounted side by side on
- 26 an appropriate standard arranged to flash alternately each light
- 27 to be visible from both directions on the highway. All standards

- 1 carrying flashing lights shall also carry at a height to be
- 2 specified by the -highway ROAD authorities -, a crossbuck
- 3 design bearing the designation "Railroad Crossing ... Tracks"
- 4 with letters studded with reflecting buttons, this design con-
- 5 forming to the requirements for "Crossing Signs" as specified in
- 6 this act. The standard shall in addition bear the designation
- 7 "Stop on Red" in reflecting button design of similar type to the
- 8 crossing sign. Whenever flashing lights are installed at any
- 9 crossing and the Michigan public utilities commission shall
- 10 find DEPARTMENT FINDS it necessary, they shall be so arranged
- 11 that for every train or switching movement over the crossing, the
- 12 flashing lights shall be in operation for a period of not less
- 13 than 20 seconds -nor- OR more than 60 seconds in advance of the
- 14 train movement reaching the nearest established curb line of the
- 15 highway and the flashing lights shall continue to operate until
- 16 the train movement has passed the established curb line on the
- 17 near side of the highway.
- 18 (3) The cost of all flashing light installations and alter
- 19 ations or relocations of same shall be borne equally by the rail
- 20 way and highway authorities, and thereafter IN WHOLE OR IN PART,
- 21 OF PROVIDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT, INSTALLATION, AND RETIREMENT OF
- 22 NEW OR EXISTING SAFETY DEVICES AT RAIL GRADE CROSSINGS SHALL BE
- 23 FUNDED FIRST BY ANY FEDERAL FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE AND,
- 24 IF FEDERAL FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, SECONDLY, BY THE RAIL GRADE
- 25 CROSSING ACCOUNT IN THE STATE TRUNK LINE FUND AS PRESCRIBED IN
- 26 SECTION 10 OF ACT NO. 51 OF THE PUBLIC ACTS OF 1951, BEING
- 27 SECTION 247.660 OF THE MICHIGAN COMPILED LAWS. THEREAFTER they

- 1 shall be maintained by the railway authorities at their own
- 2 expense except that the highway ROAD authorities shall pay
- 3 \$10.00 per month to the railroad authorities for each crossing
- 4 protected by flash light OR TRAFFIC signals. The railway author-
- 5 ities shall, however, furnish standard equipment uniform for all
- 6 railroads and on a cost and installation basis consistent for all
- 7 railroads and unusual or unbalanced costs shall be subject to the
- 8 review and adjustment of the Michigan public utilities
- 9 commission DEPARTMENT.
- 10 (4) THE DEPARTMENT, WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE RAILWAY AND
- 11 ROAD AUTHORITIES, MAY TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OTHER WARNING
- 12 DEVICES AND MAY AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION OF THESE OTHER WARNING
- 13 DEVICES FOR EXPERIMENTAL TESTING PURPOSES. THE INSTALLATION OF
- 14 OTHER WARNING DEVICES, THE FAILURE TO INSTALL OTHER WARNING
- 15 DEVICES, OR THE FAILURE TO INSTALL OR REQUEST THE INSTALLATION OF
- 16 ANY WARNING DEVICE WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ORDERED TO BE INSTALLED BY
- 17 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOT BE A BASIS FOR ANY ACTION FOR DAMAGES IN
- 18 THIS STATE.
- 19 Sec. 9. Any A person or persons having jurisdiction of
- 20 the railroad or highway at any crossing who shall violate any of
- 21 the provisions of VIOLATES this act shall be deemed IS guilty
- 22 of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not less than
- 23 -50 dollars \$2,000.00 or imprisonment -in the county jail for
- 24 not more than 30 days, or both. such fine and imprisonment in
- 25 the discretion of the court.
- 26 Sec. 10. Any A person who removes, throws down, destroys,
- 27 injures, or defaces any warning sign mentioned in this act shall

- 1 be quilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine OF not
- 2 -exceeding 100 dollars LESS THAN \$100.00 or by imprisonment -in
- 3 the county jail for not more than 90 days, or by both. such
- 4 fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court.
- 5 Sec. 11. The Michigan public utilities commission is
- 6 hereby charged with the duty of carrying DEPARTMENT SHALL CARRY
- 7 out the provisions of this act and investigating INVESTIGATE
- 8 complaints of violations of this act. The -commission will take
- 9 up with DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO the proper railroad and
- 10 -highway ROAD authorities any -and-all omissions or violations
- 11 -which it THE DEPARTMENT may find on investigation. -to exist
- 12 and it is hereby made the duty of all THE parties in charge
- 13 HAVING JURISDICTION of railroad tracks and highways -to SHALL
- 14 comply with -all orders AN ORDER of the -Michigan public utili-
- 15 ties commission DEPARTMENT issued in accordance with the provi-
- 16 sions of PURSUANT TO this act. The Michigan public utilities
- 17 commission is hereby required to notify all public highway
- 18 authorities in this state, calling particular attention to the
- 19 mandatory provisions and obligations of this act within 30 days
- 20 after the taking effect of this act.
- 21 Sec. 12. Nothing in this act shall be -so- construed -as-
- 22 to permit the authorities in charge of any railroad tracks at
- 23 crossings of existing highways to remove or disturb or cease to
- 24 maintain crossing signs now maintained at such crossings where
- 25 the -same SIGNS are required by law until such time as -these
- 26 shall have been. THEY ARE satisfactorily replaced by new signs as

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27 provided under section 5 hereof THIS ACT. All A railway

- 1 -authorities AUTHORITY shall advise the -Michigan public
- 2 utilities commission DEPARTMENT of failure on the part of the
- 3 highway authorities OF A ROAD AUTHORITY to provide the crossing
- 4 signs in REQUIRED BY this act. provided, when such failure
- 5 shall come to their notice.
 - 6 Section 2. Section 4 of Act No. 270 of the Public Acts of
 - 7 1921, being section 469.4 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, is
 - 8 repealed.