



BOB CASEY

FIGHTING *for* PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

Assistance for Local Heroes During Train Crises Act

U.S. Senators Bob Casey, John Fetterman, and Sherrod Brown

In the immediate aftermath of hazardous train derailments like the recent Norfolk Southern disaster in East Palestine, Ohio or the CSX derailment in Hyndman, Pennsylvania in 2017, local emergency responders and fire fighters are the first line of defense for public safety. With limited knowledge of what has been spilled or caught fire, these essential workers help evacuate residents, fight fires, close roads, and perform other urgent tasks to mitigate disaster. Due to the size and severity of these derailments, this work can quickly surpass the budget of local first responder organizations, especially if they need to pay workers overtime, replace damaged equipment, or purchase supplies.

Helping Our Local Heroes

Emergency personnel who respond to hazardous train derailments deserve more than our thanks. The *Assistance for Local Heroes During Train Crises Act* would give the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) the ability to declare a “hazardous train event” after the derailment of a train carrying hazardous materials, hazardous waste, or other materials that pose a threat to public health and safety. This declaration would allow the FRA to provide funding to help state and local emergency response groups, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies cover costs related to their response to a hazardous derailment—and disburse that funding quickly. This would give emergency organizations the financial flexibility they need to protect their communities in the wake of a train disaster while maintaining their ability to respond to everyday issues. Companies that ship and carry these materials would pay a fee to pay for the fund, not the taxpayers.

The *Assistance for Local Heroes During Train Crises Act* would also direct the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, to develop regulations requiring that railroads notify local emergency response groups, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies when hazardous materials are moving through their communities. When those on the ground have access to information about hazardous materials passing through their communities, they can better respond and prepare for when disaster strikes.