

Decision No. C24-0868

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 24R-0511R

IN THE MATTER OF THE TEMPORARY RULES IMPLEMENTING THE WAYSIDE
DETECTOR SYSTEMS AND REPORTING RULES, 4 CODE OF COLORADO
REGULATIONS 723-7-7330 THROUGH 7332.

**COMMISSION DECISION
ADOPTING TEMPORARY RULES**

Issued Date: November 27, 2024

Adopted Date: November 27, 2024

I. BY THE COMMISSION

A. Statement

1. This matter comes before the Commission for immediate adoption of temporary rules to implement certain critical amendments to the Rules Regulating Railroads, Rail Fixed Guideways, Transportation by Rail, and Rail Crossings contained in 4 *Code of Colorado Regulations* (“CCR”) 723-7.

2. The statutory provisions necessitating immediate issuance of these temporary rules, §§ 40-20-302 and 40-20-303, C.R.S., were enacted in House Bill (“HB”) 24-1030, which became effective on July 1, 2024. These temporary rules are necessary to implement the new statutory reporting requirements for railroads operating any mainline in the State of Colorado, starting January 1, 2025. Accordingly, and as discussed below, the temporary rules are adopted without compliance with the rulemaking procedures prescribed in § 24-4-103, C.R.S., in order to provide necessary process to ensure that railroads can fulfill the wayside detector system reporting requirements in state law, and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

3. In accordance with § 40-2-108(2), C.R.S., these temporary rules are effective for 210 days from the effective date of this Decision, or until the Commission issues permanent rules in this matter, whichever period is less.

4. Attachment A to this Decision are the temporary rules in legislative (redline/strikeout) format. Attachment B to this Decision are the temporary rules in final version format. The temporary rules are also publicly available through the Commission's E-Filings system¹ at:

https://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/efi/EFI.Show_Docket?p_session_id=&p_docket_id=24R-0511R

B. Discussion, Findings, and Conclusions

5. On May 10, 2024, Governor Jared Polis signed into law HB 24-1030 enacting new railroad safety requirements in the State of Colorado. Section 40-20-303(1), C.R.S., requires that “on or before January 1, 2025, and on or before January 1 of each year thereafter, a railroad operating any main line in the state shall submit to the Public Utilities Commission a public report that discloses, at a minimum...”. The legislation lists the minimum information to be filed in this report. The Commission finds it necessary to issue temporary rules to outline what is required to be filed with the Commission by January 1, 2025, so that the railroads subject to this reporting requirement can fully comply with the new law. As a result, by this Decision, we adopt temporary rules that implement the initial reporting requirements as required by § 40-20-303, C.R.S., in order to allow Colorado railroads to timely submit this initial wayside detector system report.

6. The adopted temporary rules comprise a new standalone section in the Rules Regulating Railroads, Rail Fixed Guideways, Transportation by Rail, and Rail Crossings contained

¹ From the *Electronic Filings* (E-Filings) system page (<https://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/efi/EFI.homepage>), the rules can also be accessed by selecting “Search” and entering this proceeding number (24R-0511R) in the “Proceeding Number” box and then selecting “Search”.

in 4 CCR 723-7. This new section is titled “Railroad and Hazardous Materials Safety.” Within this new section, Rule 7330 specifies that this subset of rules applies to all railroads and passenger railroads. Rule 7331 adds definitions relevant to the wayside detector system reporting including definitions for the terms “defect,” “dragging equipment detector,” “hot bearings detector,” “main line,” “railroad,” “train,” and “wayside detector system,” and Rule 7332 outlines the substance of the reporting requirements.

7. Rulemaking is a lengthy process involving a notice period, opportunity to hear the public’s views both orally and in writing, time for the Commission to analyze and adopt the final rules, and time to file the final rules with the Secretary of State for publication in *The Colorado Register*. If the Commission waits until permanent rules are in place, railroads in Colorado would not be able to meet this new statutory requirement to file wayside detector system information with the Commission on or before January 1, 2025. Thus, immediate adoption of these temporary rules implementing the statutory wayside detector system reporting requirement is imperatively necessary to comply with state law and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

8. The temporary rules shall be effective on the issued date of this Decision and shall remain in effect until permanent rules become effective or for 210 days, whichever period is less. In the permanent rulemaking that will be opened after a more thorough stakeholder process, we will put forth the expanded wayside detector system reporting requirement for consideration in permanent rules.

9. The statutory authority for the temporary rules is found, generally, at §§ 40-1-103.5 and 40-2-108, C.R.S. (authorizing the Commission to promulgate rules necessary to administer and enforce Title 40) and § 24-4-103(6), C.R.S. (allowing and specifying procedures for adoption

of temporary rules) and, specifically, in HB 24-1030, as codified at §§ 40-20-302 and 40-20-303, C.R.S.

II. ORDER

A. The Commission Orders That:

1. The rules in final version format available in this Proceeding through the Commission's E-Filings system are hereby adopted as temporary rules for the reasons described above and pursuant to the provisions of § 24-4-103(6)(a), C.R.S.

2. The temporary rules shall be effective on the Issued Date of this Decision. Such rules shall remain in effect until permanent rules become effective or for 210 days, whichever period is less.

3. The 20-day period provided in § 40-6-114, C.R.S., within which to file applications for rehearing, reargument, or reconsideration, begins on the first day following the effective date of this Decision.

4. This Decision is effective immediately upon its Issued Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' WEEKLY MEETING
November 27, 2024.**

(S E A L)



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

Rebecca E. White,
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

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MEGAN M. GILMAN

TOM PLANT

Commissioners