



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS



September 14, 2026

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As the House and Senate continue consideration of the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) we, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong opposition to any effort to add language to the final legislative package that would mandate public disclosure of aircraft, rail, and vehicle manifest information under the Tariff Act of 1930. After serious concerns were raised about the language, a similar amendment was not included in the Fiscal Year 2026 NDAA legislation, and we urge you to ensure this harmful provision is not included in the final version of the bill.

Our multimodal coalition shares the goal of ensuring resilient, secure, and transparent supply chains and recognizes the important work nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) carry out to counteract counterfeiting and trafficking across borders. However, making these manifests public also makes them accessible to bad actors, including foreign competitors, state-owned enterprises, foreign adversaries, and criminal syndicates. These bad actors will use the data for nefarious purposes, including cargo theft, making the U.S. supply chain vulnerable to the same actions this amendment seeks to address.

Although the proposal, originally offered by Senators Cassidy and Whitehouse and introduced as the Manifest Modernization Act, does include mandatory protections to redact Social Security numbers and other identifying information, a vast amount of

other sensitive, private data is still reported on these manifests. A system currently exists for ocean carriers to request confidentiality of their manifests on a case-by-case, shipment-by-shipment basis; however, it is both costly and limited. With Customs and Border Protection (CBP) already screening over 90,000 rail, sea, and truck containers plus millions of air cargo shipments daily, this system could soon become overloaded with no plan in place to address the resulting flood of initial confidentiality requests, as well as renewal applications that must be filed every two years.

The proposed language would create sweeping vulnerabilities across every mode of cargo transport. By mandating the public release of sensitive supply chain information, the amendment poses significant harm to American businesses and industry, undermines fair competition, and creates serious economic and national security risks.

Should this legislative proposal be adopted, it would result in:

- **Exposure of sensitive data:** Publication of manifests would give competitors, including foreign state-owned enterprises, such as those in China, access to proprietary commercial and shipping information, putting U.S. companies at a direct disadvantage.
- **National security concerns:** Foreign governments and bad actors would gain access to sensitive data that would provide a blueprint to target customers and the broader supply chain with insider threats and malicious activity.
- **Supply chain vulnerabilities:** Shipment details for hazardous materials, high-value consumer goods, life-saving pharmaceuticals, and – in some cases military assets – would become publicly available, enabling adversaries to replicate legitimate trade patterns; evade or exploit CBP and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) enforcement efforts to detect illicit activity; and advance sophisticated, organized cargo theft operations.
- **Competitive and operational burdens:** U.S. customers and suppliers across all transport modes would have their relationships exposed to competitors, including foreign carriers, undermining fair market competition. Furthermore, additional paperwork and regulatory hurdles, particularly for cross-border operations, where congestion and compliance requirements are already growing, would be overly burdensome for both regulated entities and regulators.
- **One-size-fits-all:** Whether it is trucks at the border, rail shipments at yards, or air cargo and passenger carriers transporting cargo at gateways, the amendment imposes broad regulatory risks without regard to the distinct operational and security realities of each mode.

Again, we strongly urge you to oppose the Manifest Modernization Act and reject efforts to include any similar language in the final NDAA.

Thank you for your consideration. We welcome the opportunity to provide further information at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Airlines for America

American Short Line and Railroad Association

American Trucking Associations

Association of American Railroads

Cargo Airline Association

Express Association of America

National Air Transportation Association

National Business Aviation Association