

*Railroad Safety—U.S.-Canadian Comparison*

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**RAILROAD SAFETY—  
U.S.-CANADIAN COMPARISON**



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## FOREWORD

In June 1978, the Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce of the House of Representatives Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee requested the Office of Technology Assessment to conduct "a detailed comparison between conditions prevailing in railway safety in the United States and a review of safety operations in Canada."

Responding to this request, this OTA report identifies the similarities and differences between the U.S. and Canadian railroad systems and Government/rail relationships. It establishes a base from which the overall comparability of safety between the two systems is made. The report surveys the safety activities of Canadian railroads, Government, labor, and other organizations and compares those efforts with counterpart safety activities in the United States.

This report represents a significant cooperative effort on the part of Canadian and U.S. Government agencies, railroads, and labor groups in creating mutual understanding of railroad safety policy and programs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John H. Gibbons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report, "Rail Safety: A U.S.-Canadian Comparison, " was undertaken by the Office of Technology Assessment at the request of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee of the House of Representatives.

In conducting the analysis, OTA utilized information and data generated in the previous OTA *Evaluation of Railroad Safety* published in May 1978, and additional information on U.S. rail safety provided by Government, industry, and labor sources. Data, information, and assistance regarding Canadian railroad safety was provided by the Canadian Transport Commission, Labour Canada, the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway, the Canadian National Railway (CN), and the Canadian Railway Labour Association.

The study was conducted by OTA staff with the contractual assistance of the Newman and Hermanson Company, Mr. Ralph Hoar as editor, and his. Marese Miles as typist. Special assistance was provided by Jim Leach and Joel Miller within OTA. Advice and assistance was provided by a U.S. advisory panel comprised of representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration, the Association of American Railroads, the Railway Labor Executives Association, the Union Pacific Railroad, and Carnegie Mellon University. In addition, numerous other persons provided valuable insight and information regarding safety for the study effort. A detailed list of the persons interviewed is included in appendix A.

This study sought to give a general overview of the similarities and differences between the U.S. and Canadian rail systems, Government structures, accident and casualty pictures, and rail safety policies and programs. Time and data limitations did not permit detailed comparisons of such items as operational data and codes, specific accident comparisons, Government economic policies, and rail resource allocations.

Special thanks are extended to the Canadian Transport Commission and the Railway Transport Committee, Labour Canada, CN Rail, CP Rail, the Canadian Railway Labour Association, and to the numerous persons who assisted in the study effort. Appreciation is also extended to the U.S. advisory panel, the Newman and Hermanson Company, Ralph Hoar, and Teri Miles for their excellent support.