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**Railroads fighting fees for safety inspections**

MONROE, La. (AP) - The Louisiana Railroad Association has filed a lawsuit to keep the Public Service Commission from implementing a new safety program that the railroads would have to pay for.

Louisiana's Legislature voted last year to implement the Federal Railroad Safety State Participation Program, which 30 other states have adopted. The program involves hiring safety inspectors to look at warning devices, crossings and tracks.

But the legislation didn't say how the program was to be funded, so the Public Service Commission set the fees and made 16 railroads responsible for funding it.

The lawsuit was filed in state court in Baton Rouge. Carmack Blackmon, the attorney for the Railroad Association, expects a hearing sometime in mid-January.

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