

LD 1015 2-Person crew testimony

My name is Daniel Cadogan; I'm writing on behalf of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, a division of the Teamsters Rail Conference. I am a Locomotive Engineer and the Chairman of the New England Legislative board.

To briefly qualify, I have 28 years of experience in the rail industry. I've been a Locomotive Engineer for twenty-one years and I was a Conductor for the seven years preceding that.

What's before you would require freight trains to operate with a minimum crew of two individuals. This measure doubles the safety for crewmembers, the communities they travel through, and the freight that is being transported.

The railroad is a complex system of operation. Situations that are dangerous to life lurk around every curve, at every crossing, and with every passing train. Most railroaders keep schedules that require 24-hour availability, with as little as a two-hour notice to report to work. Freight trains operating in New England can range between 5,000 and 11,000 feet long. Weighing upwards of 10,000 tons. Imagine, if you will, a twenty-million-pound train, two-miles long traversing your district. That's a tremendous amount of responsibility for one person.

In years past, freight crews consisted of an Engineer, Fireman, Conductor, and 2 Brakeman. Technology has facilitated a reduction in the work force over the last 40 years, and we have conceded to most of this downsizing, but reducing the size of an operating crew to a sole person is simply put, a public safety hazard. It's an unnecessary risk that benefits Railroad Shareholders to the detriment of every abutter along the right-of-way. Coincidentally a two-person crew maintains the current standard; it does not create additional work in the industry.

Minnesota just became the 13th state to pass a similar law. The other states are Illinois, New York, Kansas, Ohio, California, Wisconsin, Arizona, West Virginia, Minnesota, Washington, Nevada, and Colorado. While this is not something widely practiced in New England, it needs to be addressed before it becomes commonplace. There are initiatives on the federal level to regulate this but if that legislation fails, we here in New England, would like you to regulate the railroads into a safe operation.

A similar standard exists in the commercial airline industry. Two-person flight crews are mandatory, and I strongly believe this needs to be echoed in the freight industry. I personally wouldn't want to operate an eighty-car HAZMAT train alone any more than I'd like to fly on a one pilot plane.

I'll close with this. In the early morning hours of July 6th 2013 in Lac-Megantic Quebec a 74-car freight train loaded with 2.16 million gallons of crude oil rolled down a 1.2% grade reaching speeds upwards of 65 mph before derailing on a 10-mph curve. This resulted in a catastrophic wreck seen from space that burned for 2-days, it left 42 souls confirmed dead and 5 missing, presumed dead. This train was left standing by a lone employee. He was charged with 47 counts of criminal negligence, but ultimately found not guilty. This accident was a mere 12 years ago, 23 miles north of the Maine Border. The ripple effect of this completely avoidable event is immeasurable.

I encourage your support for this legislation and again thank you for the opportunity to speak about it.

Sincerely,
Daniel M. Cadogan