



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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**Donna S. Edwards**

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**SB 915 - Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew  
Senate Finance Committee  
March 21, 2023**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 915. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

As union representatives, we all take pride in representing our members to provide them with good wages, health care benefits, safe working conditions and the ability to retire with a pension and dignity. Our members know their contribution to the labor force is valuable and appreciated. In the work environment, the safety and well-being of our members is of the utmost importance. None of the collectively bargained wages, benefits and working conditions are worth anything if our members do not make it to retirement due to being injured or killed on the job.

The thought of a two-mile long freight train operating through our communities should be frightening to each and every one of you. I am from Cumberland, which has always been a railroad town and has many freight trains that operate on a daily basis, and commuter trains operating twice daily. I cannot imagine an accident like those highlighted today happening in my hometown, or in nearby mountain communities. Common sense dictates that, for public safety reasons, two persons on the job are better than one.

None of us in this room want to be asked why we did not support this commonsense safety legislation if a tragic accident happened and a second crew member could have prevented it or mitigated the damages from it.

All of organized labor stands in solidarity with our rail worker brothers and sisters. We, in the labor movement, know that worker safety cannot be taken for granted, compromised, or given away through the collective bargaining process. As law makers we know that you recognize where the collective bargaining process ends and public policy begins – especially when the safety of the public, the environment, and workers are at stake. To further prove the point that all of labor stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who work in rail transportation, I have attached to this testimony the

resolution from our 32nd Biennial Convention, reaffirming Labor's unanimous support for the veto override of this previously passed rail safety legislation. It was unfortunate that the override was never passed, but we have an opportunity in this Session, with the passage of SB 915, to finally make rail safety a priority.

The legislature has recognized the importance of this legislation, which was evident with the Senate passing it 33-13 and the House passing it 102-30, during the 2019 Legislative Session. This safety bill is extremely popular and has already been shown to receive wide support in the Maryland General Assembly.

We ask for a favorable report on SB 915.

## **Resolution #12: In Support of a Veto Override of HB 66 & SB 252 – Required Crew**

**WHEREAS** the safety of the public in regard to the risks associated with the transportation of freight by rail is best served by BOTH implementing new safety technology AND assuring that freight trains continue to be operated by a crew of at least two professionals; and

**WHEREAS** to this end, the Maryland State Legislative Board of the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART), fought for and successfully got passed by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote legislation in the State of Maryland during the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Maryland Legislature requiring freight train crews of at least two persons; and

**WHEREAS** the success in achieving this legislation involved the outstanding support of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO and its affiliates; and

**WHEREAS** this 2018 and 2019 legislation was vetoed by the Governor of Maryland; and

**WHEREAS** the Maryland Constitution prohibited the legislature from overriding the Governor's veto in 2018, but does not prevent the legislature from overriding the 2019 vetoes; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Maryland State & District of Columbia AFL-CIO and its affiliates hereby commit to support the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) and urge the entire Maryland General Assembly to override the Governor's vetoes of HB 66 & SB 252 respectively; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO will provide the entire Maryland General Assembly with a copy of this resolution, upon passage, on the first day of the 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

**Submitted by:** *Larry Kasecamp*

**Committee: Industrial Safety**  
*Delegate, SMART-TD Local 632*

**Convention Action: Unanimously passed**