



## Senate Finance Committee

**To:** Senator Melony Griffith, Chair; Senator Kathy Klausmeier, Vice-Chair; and Members of the Committee.  
**From:** Jason Ascher, Political Director, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association.

### **STRONGLY SUPPORT – SB 915 - Movement of Freight – Required Crew**

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and its over 20,000 members and families across Maryland, I ask you to **SUPPORT SB 915 – Movement of Freight – Required Crew.**

We stand in solidarity with our brothers working on train crews. In the Pipe Trades, as with the rest of the building trades community, we train our members to think safety first and make sure apprentices receive the necessary training from OSHA and that they work under a licensed journeyman throughout their training. Not having two crew members on a train is like sending a day one first-year apprentice onto a construction site without a journeyman and telling them to weld two multi-ton pipes together. On the railways, as on the construction site, safety must come first.

In the construction industry, apprentices learn on the job by working with a journeyman. The journeyman is there to have a mentor to help teach them their craft, ensure compliance with safety standards, and teach them the ins and out of a job. Similarly, a single man crew leaves new conductors without that mentorship from an experienced engineer teaching them the locomotive system's ins and outs, signal systems, and tracks. A single crew member would lead to fewer experienced conductors and engineers and a less safe work environment.

Having a single crew member on a train also means there is no second set of eyes to remind them of slow orders, blocked signals, or mechanical failure at road crossings. A single crew member would also lead to unnecessary distractions, some of which would be mandatory, like copying directives and responding on the radio. These people are human, and that second set of eyes helps make sure tragic mistakes do not happen.

For the reasons listed above, I ask you to **SUPPORT SB 915.**

Sincerely,

Jason Ascher  
Political Director  
Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association



# METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

## **SB 915 - Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew** **Environment and Transportation Committee** **March 21, 2023**

### **Support**

To: Hon. Melony Griffith, Chair & members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in **support** of SB 915 - *Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew*. My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO—our central labor council coalition represents over 100 affiliated local unions and close to 80,000 proud union members in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard counties, and Baltimore City.

The importance of prioritizing the health and safety of our railroad crews is articulated through this critical piece of legislation. Currently, without the requirement to have at least two crew persons on freight rail the potential for emergency situations that cannot properly be addressed increases exponentially.

For example, without a second crew member, the engineer will not receive warnings about slow orders, work orders, block signals, road crossing mechanical failures, or other restrictions impacting the movement of their train. It is very possible that problems will occur and very possible that an engineer could fall short on receiving any of the stated messages needed to safely deliver freight. This bill does not just protect the safety of the train operators and engineers, it also protects the safety of the communities these trains travel through each day.

The movement of our nation's freight is directly related to the strength of our economy. With this legislation we ensure that we take all required measures to protect the prosperity of our state and safety of its workers.

For the above reasons, we ask for a **favorable report** on SB 915 - *Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew*.



*A Union of Professionals*  
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Kenya Campbell  
PRESIDENT

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**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee  
SB 915 – Railroad Company - Movement of Freight - Required Crew  
March 21, 2023**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Griffith and members of the committee, on behalf of the more than 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), we ask a favorable report on SB 915 - Movement of Freight – Required Crew, as a safety measure for all citizens.

A two-person train crew is a vital component of rail safety and sound public policy. In 2013, Transport Canada established a government mandate requiring two-person crews in response to the Lac-Mégantic oil train disaster when a freight train carrying 72 tank cars of crude oil derailed and exploded, killing 47 people after its single crew member left the train unattended.

The United States has yet to follow suit with a federally promulgated rule or law, and only five states have implemented a two-person train crew requirement.

The Federal Railroad Administration has signaled plans to require two-man crews on trains carrying oil and freight trains, which is the industry's standard practice, but its proposed rule hasn't been issued.

Again, we ask for a favorable report on SB 915. Thank you.

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# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

AFFILIATED WITH:

Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building Trades Council — AFL-CIO

Baltimore Port Council

Baltimore Metro Council — AFL-CIO

Central MD Labor Council — AFL-CIO

Del-Mar-Va Labor Council — AFL-CIO

Maryland State - D.C. — AFL-CIO

National Safety Council



AFL-CIO-CLC

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21230

**Written Testimony of**

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**Rico Albacarys, Assistant Business Agent, IBEW LOCAL 24**

**Before the**

**Senate Finance Committee on**

**SB 915 Railroad Company – Movement of Freight – Required Crew**

**SUPPORT**

March 17, 2023

Madame Chair Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony **supporting** Senate Bill 915.

My name is Rico Albacarys and I am a member and employee of IBEW Local 24 in Baltimore. In industries where workers are exposed to hazards, a buddy system is crucial for safety. This is seen in transportation industries like commercial airlines, military air transport, ferry operations, and ocean shipping. In construction, a buddy system also protects workers, customer property, employees, and the public.

The idea of one person operating a freight train that could be over a mile long and carry hazardous cargo is concerning. Working alone can lead to fatigue, distraction, or missing important signals, instructions, or changing conditions that affect train safety. Accidents on the rails can be fatal and have costly environmental consequences. It is crucial that train engineers have a second person with them to focus on safe rail operations.

For these reasons, I am asking you to give a **favorable** report on SB 915.

Sincerely,

Rico Albacarys

Assistant Business Agent IBEW Local 24



# WESTERN MARYLAND CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

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March 21, 2023

Chairman Melony Griffith and Members of Senate Finance Committee:

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*Vice President*  
LARRY KASECAMP

*Secretary - Treasurer*  
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JASON WEAVER

*Cope Director*  
JODY OLIVER


## RE: SB-915 Support

For the record, my name is George Koontz. I am the President of IBEW Local 307 and the President of the Western Maryland Central Labor Council. I am employed through the Local as a licensed electrician. I am a lifelong resident of Maryland currently residing in Allegany County.

In my occupation I frequently work in and around hazardous conditions. I know how important it is to have a second set of eyes in these situations. In the construction industry, the skilled trades use a buddy system for workers to protect their safety as well as the safety of the customers property, the employees, and the public in general. In the transportation industry, most modes of operation have more than one person overseeing them too. This type of safety procedure on the operation of equipment provides the operators and the public with an invaluable measure of safety.

The thought of allowing freight trains to traverse through Maryland with only one crew member is preposterous. Today's trains are up to two miles long and carry all kinds of hazardous material. And as experience tells us, accidents on the rails tend to be very costly with property damage, environmental damage, injuries and even deaths being the outcome.

Our Council and its affiliates strongly urge your committee to pass SB-915, this very valuable safety legislation, as your committee has previously done on several occasions and keep Maryland safe!

Sincerely,  
  
George A. Koontz  
President



## **UAW REGION 8 MARYLAND STATE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS CAP**

**Testimony in Support to SB 915 Railroad Company-Movement of Freight-Required Crew**

**March 21, 2023**

**To: The Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee**  
**From: Frederick V. Swanner, Chairman**  
**UAW Local 239 Active & Retiree Council**  
**Re: SB 915 Railroad Company-Movement of Freight-Required Crew**

I am writing the Chair and all members of the Senate Finance Committee to urge you to support SB 915. It is a major safety item of concern; SB 915 is designed to take care of the railroad workers and or pedestrians by communicating at all times by radio issues in and around the Train. Examples of why there should be a two-person crew on trains; the engineer is not allowed to leave the engine compartment for any reason other than maybe his/her safety. One reason of many is if one of the two crew members has a heart attack, slips and falls or is rendered unconscious for whatever reason who would know except his co-worker, to take control of the train. All workplaces need to be as safe as humanly possible.

In closing I would like to state that in all our General Motors, Ford and Chrysler plants around the country we have a Buddy System (two-member crew) whereas no one works in confined space or unpopulated work areas by themselves for safety reasons. So, I urge this committee to support SB 915. Worker's and Pedestrian's safety should be top priority and should not be traded for a company's bottom line. The communities of my members and family that live in neighborhoods these trains travel through thank you for their safety as well.

**Kind Regards,**

**Frederick V. Swanner, Chairman UAW  
Local 239 Active & Retiree Council**