



TESTIMONY FOR SB1060 Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2024

Bill Sponsor: Senators Ellis and Augustine
Committee: Finance
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB1060 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There have been too many train accidents involving hazardous materials in the country. Maryland is not immune. In 2013, a collision between a truck and a train in Rosedale, a suburb of Baltimore(!), led to a dangerous leak of sodium chlorate and terephthalic acid. These volatile substances combined and resulted in an explosion within minutes. The consequences of such hazardous materials accidents are devastating, emphasizing the importance of safety measures and vigilance when it comes to transportation of dangerous chemicals.

By implementing the Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2024, we are promoting safety while protecting workers' rights and enhancing environmental stewardship in the railroad industry. This Act specifies that trains are to have at least 2 crew members and the state is to maintain a database tracking Hazardous Materials and Waste Transportation. In addition, investigations by representatives of railroad labor unions are allowed, ensuring transparency and accountability in labor-related matters.

Because of our geographic desirability, Maryland has always been a thoroughfare for trains. It's one of the reasons so many Civil War battles were fought here. Like many Marylanders, I am less than half a mile from an important rail crossing. I can hear the trains, so I must surely be within range of a cataclysmic accident. I need to know that Maryland is tracking hazardous material moved by rail and that at least 2 crew members are onboard in case of emergencies.

These steps are needed to increase Maryland railway safety.

Our Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.