

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Regina T. Boyce  
6 Bladen Street  
House Office Building Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Boyce and Members of the House Environmental and Transportation Committee,

For the record, my name is Joe Arbona, representing the Maryland Midland Railway, and I am writing to strongly oppose HB 958 - Railroads Safety Requirements (Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2025). As one of Maryland's short line railroads, the Maryland Midland Railway would be negatively impacted by many of the provisions laid out in the bill.

The Maryland Midland Railway, Inc. is an 81-mile short line railroad operating from Highfield to Emory Grove and from Taneytown to Woodsboro. Among our shippers are Lehigh Cement in Union Bridge, Laurel Sand & Gravel in Woodsboro, NVR and Structural LLC in Thurmont, and Glen Gery Brick in Rocky Ridge. We play a key transportation role in rural parts of Maryland.

In previous years, crew size bills that have moved through this committee had language to help carve out short line railroads. Unfortunately, the language around crew size in HB 958 is broader than the past and does not address the differences in operations and staffing capacity between short line and large Class I railroads.

Additionally, some of the other provisions in the bill will have a negative impact on our short line, particularly the provision for railroads to allow union representatives to investigate railroad operations is very problematic and redundant. Labor union membership does not guarantee expertise to inspect railroads. That is a task currently carried out by expert inspectors of the Federal Railroad Administration.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for an unfavorable report on HB 958.

Sincerely,

Joe Arbona  
Assistant Vice President  
Maryland Midland Railway