

March 5, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: FAVORABLE

**SB- 855 - Railroads – Safety Requirements
(Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2025)**

Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for affording me the opportunity to submit testimony today. I am Thomas Skinner, 1st vice president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland.

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents more than 10,000 active and retired professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel who proudly serve the citizens of the State of Maryland

Senate Bill 855 will provide for a safer workspace not only for our Sisters and Brothers in the railroad industry but also, for our Maryland First Responders and the citizens that we serve.

This bill addresses safety concerns and regulations related to railroad operations in Maryland, focusing on crew size, grade crossing management, train length, equipment monitoring, and hazardous material transportation.

A key provision addressed is crew size. Freight trains must operate with a minimum crew of two individuals to enhance safety and accountability. With trains reaching lengths of one and one-half miles, a mandate of two members on the crew would allow for the engineer to stay with the locomotive as currently required, while allowing for the second member to become an immediate liaison to the first responders providing information on the contents and possible hazards contained on the train.

Another valuable provision provides Union access for safety investigations. Railroad companies should grant authorized labor union representatives access to their properties to investigate safety hazards and regulatory compliance, promoting oversight and worker safety.

Overall, this legislation aims to enhance the safety of railroad operations, protect workers, and mitigate risks to public safety, our Maryland First Responders and the citizens that we serve.

On behalf of the members of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, I urge you to support SB855,, an important piece of legislation that will not only address safety concerns for our dedicated women and men in the railroad industry but, also our first responders.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Skinner
1st Vice President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland