



March 3, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO SB 855

Dear Chair Beidle:

I write in strong opposition to SB 855 imposing new requirements on Maryland's freight rail network. The Canton Railroad is a 16-mile Class III short line which has served customers since 1906 in the Port of Baltimore area and in an industrial park near Perryville.

As operator of a business that is so closely tied to important Baltimore shippers and to the Port, I am concerned about pending legislation that could undercut our customers' and the Port's competitiveness. The Port is one of our greatest assets and provides a path to the middle class for so many of our citizens.

The Canton Railroad is a common carrier in the movement of interstate commerce. Accordingly, we are partly regulated by only the Federal government. Additional and separate regulation of the U.S. freight rail network by each of the 50 States would promote an inefficient patchwork, ultimately pushing much freight traffic to already congested highways.

For much of the last fourteen months, The Canton Railroad has operated at a significant net loss. Any proposed oversight by the State of Maryland regarding the proposals described in SB 855 would significantly and adversely impact our path to profitability. Specific impacts to our business are more fully described on the attached page two.

Our operation is extremely cost-sensitive, particularly since we compete with over-the-road truck on price and service each and every day. Additionally, we need to continue the great strides made in recent years to make our port more competitive, not go in the other direction. For this reason, I ask that you oppose SB 855.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul Barnes
President & CEO

TWO-MAN CREW

Specifically, a two-man crew requirement would add considerable time and cost to our operation. Based on previous studies and my professional observations riding with locomotive crews, multiple crew members in a locomotive cab could create distractions, impeding safety and productivity.

HAZMAT DATABASE

The Canton Railroad operates safely and has not had an incident involving hazardous material since 2007. We train our employees on a regular basis to ensure safe operations. We coordinate with first responders to ensure they are informed of the hazardous commodities our railroad moves and we offer training to educate first responders and employees on how to handle any releases. Accordingly, the need for a State-operated hazardous material railroad database is not needed.

UNION INSPECTIONS

The provision for railroads to allow union representatives to investigate railroad operations is very problematic and redundant. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inspects our operation on a regular, usually unannounced basis. The FRA are experts in the inspection 'field'; Labor union members are not.