



TESTIMONY FOR SB0855

Railroads - Safety Requirements (Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2025)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ellis

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative

Coalition **Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0855 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.

It's mind-boggling that railroads crisscrossing our state are operating without the Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2025. Picture this: trains over a mile and a half long with just one crew member hauling who-knows-what are currently deemed acceptable. What could possibly go wrong? Imagine an accident where the sole crew member is injured, the train blocks multiple roads, and an unknown toxin is released—this scenario is not just possible but completely unacceptable to our members.

HB0958 mandates that a freight train must have a crew of at least two individuals, with fines ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for non-compliance. Additionally, a train operating on a main or branch line in Maryland may not exceed 8,500 feet in length unless granted an exception, or it will face a \$10,000 penalty. The bill also requires the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to establish and oversee a system for reporting the transportation of hazardous materials and waste by rail.

This bill is crucial for Marylanders because it tackles the pressing safety concerns associated with railroad operations. By implementing these safety measures, the bill safeguards the public, railroad workers, and the environment from potential hazards. Moreover, it ensures the efficient and safe transportation of goods, which is vital for the state's economy and overall well-being.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition steadfastly supports this bill and similar initiatives that result in greater safety for Marylanders.