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SB 156 - Railroads - Required Crew for Movement of Freight

Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2026

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 156. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 156 establishes a basic safety standard: any freight train operating in Maryland in connection with the movement of railroad freight must have a crew of at least two qualified individuals.

Rail workers are on call 24/7, often working long and tiring shifts while managing complex equipment, monitoring track conditions, and responding to emergencies. These responsibilities cannot be safely carried out by a single crew member and should not be carried out by a single crew member.

This requirement is not new. States including Minnesota, California, Illinois, Colorado, Nevada, and Washington have already adopted similar two-person crew laws to strengthen rail safety and reduce risks.

Railroad operating rules have historically been enacted *after* a tragic incident has occurred. This legislation works to prevent catastrophic events that have devastated far too many communities. SB 156 is the minimum needed to ensure compliance with the railroad's extensive operating rules, maintain awareness, and protect both the people who keep it running and the public.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 156.



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