



TESTIMONY FOR SB0156
Railroads – Required Crew for Movement of Freight

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ellis

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0156 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0156 establishes a straightforward but essential safety requirement: freight trains operating in Maryland must have a minimum of two crew members. This standard reflects what rail workers, emergency responders, and safety experts have emphasized for years—safe freight operations require more than one person in the cab. A second crew member is critical for monitoring equipment, responding to emergencies, coordinating with first responders, and ensuring that trains carrying hazardous materials can be operated safely through Maryland communities.

Rail traffic has grown longer and more complex, and the cargo moving through our state increasingly includes hazardous and flammable materials. When something goes wrong—a mechanical failure, a derailment, a medical emergency—one person simply cannot manage the situation alone. SB0156 ensures that Maryland maintains a basic level of operational safety and does not fall behind other states that have already adopted similar crew-size requirements.

This bill directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work is grounded in protecting Marylanders, strengthening public safety, and ensuring that state policy reflects the needs of communities rather than the preferences of large corporate interests. Rail corridors run through dense and minority neighborhoods, small towns, and critical environmental areas. A two-person crew requirement reduces

risk, improves response times, and helps safeguard the people and places we are committed to protecting. SB0156 reinforces the values of accountability and community well-being that guide our coalition's work.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0156.