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## **Federal Regulators Must Prohibit One-Person Freight Train Crews**

*Washington, D.C. — John Previsich, president of SMART Transportation Division and Dennis Pierce, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, issued this statement following the joint submission of comments responding to the Federal Railroad Administration's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking establishing a minimum size for train crews*

“Operating freight trains with one-person train crews is unsafe and must be prohibited. That is the message we delivered yesterday in comments filed with federal rail safety regulators.

“Our comments provide a clear rationale for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to finalize a rule this year and to close loopholes included in the agency’s initial proposed rule that could permit the limited use of one-person crew freight operations.

“We have waged an aggressive campaign shining a spotlight on the dangers associated with the use of one-person freight train crews. Regulators must ensure that a certified engineer and a certified conductor are working on every freight train. These two safety professionals – our members – work together to minimize the effects of fatigue, deal with emergency situations including hazardous materials accidents and incidents, operate advanced technologies and comply with myriad federal rail safety requirements. They also provide critical backup to one another as decisions are made that often save lives. A single crew-member cannot perform these tasks and still maintain the highest safety standards.

“A two-person minimum crew size rule is needed in light of public statements by the freight rail carriers that they want to implement one-person operations and will continue to pursue this dangerous course in collective bargaining. We are also deeply concerned with rail industry claims that implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) technology will somehow lessen the need for a second crew member. These erroneous claims should be dismissed given the clear evidence that PTC will actually increase the demands on operating crews and distract them from carrying out their already complex duties. What is obvious to our members is that the railroads want to slash operating crews and use those “savings” to pay for deployment of PTC. Our government must reject these smokescreen tactics and never permit the multi-billion dollar rail industry to water down safety standards through negotiations.

“We thank the Administration for its leadership and urge completion of a final rule this year. The regulations must put to rest the absurd notion that massive freight trains – more often than not filled with hazardous materials – can safely traverse our communities with a single crewmember on-board.”

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*The Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART TD) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) represent the vast majority of operating train crew members across the country.*