

SB 229 sample letter

Subject: Requesting Senator Cliff Hite's support for SB 229 - Two-person train crew legislation

Dear Senator (recipient's name),

My name is _____ and I live in District _____. As a railroad worker/family member and your constituent, I am asking you to support Senate Bill 229, the two-person crew legislation that was introduced in the Senate on Oct. 14, 2015. This important legislation would require that freight trains be operated by at least two individuals. SB 229 was recently referred to the Public Utilities Committee.

Despite the rail carriers claims, SB 229 will not cost the railroads any additional money, considering that 99 percent of the carriers already operate with a qualified conductor & locomotive engineer on all freight trains.

While two-person crews currently operate on almost all freight trains, some rogue operators have begun operating with a single crewmember. On July 6, 2013, an unattended freight train carrying 72 tank cars of crude oil derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people and destroying much of the town. The train rolled away from its parked position because the single crewmember could not properly secure it alone.

The safety benefits of having two crewmembers on board are not limited to parking a train:

Engineers and conductors are each responsible for a long list of unique duties, most of which must be carried out simultaneously. Consolidating these responsibilities to one individual would only exacerbate the most critical safety issue facing the rail industry today - high levels of fatigue among operating employees - and result in additional train accidents.

Two-person crews not only help prevent potential accidents or derailments, but also play a critical role in mitigating emergency situations when they do occur.

Positive Train Control (PTC), while an important safety technology, cannot replace the vital role of a second crewmember. The carriers also claim that PTC will automate train operations. It will not. PTC is simply a crash-avoidance system, and does not replace the duties of a conductor.

Across this country, the public overwhelmingly supports two-person crew freight

train operations (September 2015 survey attached).

Two-person crew legislation is already on the books in the following states: Wisconsin, Arizona, West Virginia and most recently California. Let's make Ohio the fifth state to make freight train operations safer.

Lastly, no one would approve of a commercial airliner being operated by one pilot, even though a plane can fly itself; freight trains, which cannot operate themselves, should be treated no differently.

I respectfully ask that you support SB 229 today.

Respectfully yours,