

Submitter:

Bart Doern

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Joint Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB723

Hello. I have worked at the railroad for 27 years and cannot stress enough how important this bill is. Having 2 people on a freight train that can at times be 15,000 feet long is essential. What if something goes wrong with the equipment? It happens. Inspections of the equipment are not what they used to be. Much less time is allotted to make sure all of the pieces are working before a train is launched to rumble through the state of Oregon day and night. Once, I had to zip tie part of the brake rigging that was dragging and had tripped a detector. Of course, it was in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere. My engineer was in the cab, making sure the train didn't move, while I did the repair. Another time, a train I was on came apart and the knuckle that holds the cars together needed replaced. After walking back half a mile to find the issue, I had the engineer set a replacement knuckle on the ground and pull the part of the train that was still attached to the locomotive up to where the engineer placed the knuckle. I put the knuckle on the walkway of the car and we shoved the 1/2 mile back to where the rest of the train was so I could replace it, put the train back together, walk back to the engine and be on our way. Knuckles weigh about 80 pounds, so walking that far on uneven terrain is not a good option. What if there was only 1 person in the cab to complete that task? What if during that task, crossings are blocked and there is an emergency vehicle trying to save a life? What if a single person on a train has a medical emergency? What if it's dark and foggy and a single person in the crew isn't sure about the indication of the signal they just passed. Who do they ask?

Those are a lot of what if's. I am not willing to take a gamble with safety so the railroads, which are already ridiculously lucrative, can make another dollar. Are you? I support this bill to protect not only the people that work for the railroads, but the people in the communities that we serve. Thank you for your time.