

Submitter:

Matthew McMichael

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Joint Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB723

My name is Matthew McMichael, I am a conductor often working out of Ontario, Oregon. I'm here to voice my strong support for Bill SB723 and the need for two-man crews on railroads. This isn't just a job issue for me—it's personal. A second crew member means safety for the people I work with every day. Railroading throws constant challenges at you: mechanical hiccups, confusing situations, or sudden emergencies. When it's just you in the cab, you're stuck with only your own ideas to troubleshoot. A second person isn't just a sounding board—they verify your thinking, catch what you miss, and help find the best fix fast. That's critical when you're miles from anywhere, especially in Oregon's remote stretches.

Think about those isolated areas you've seen tracks cutting through. Now imagine a medical emergency striking someone alone in that cab. How long would it take for help to reach them? No clear access roads, no easy way to get a vehicle to the head end unless it happens to be by paved highway and even then, what address are you gonna tell them to go to? That's a real risk I face, and it's why a two-man crew matters so much to me and my coworkers.

But it's not just about us—it's about you, too. You've probably been delayed at a crossing by a stopped train, wondering what's holding it up. These trains aren't getting shorter; they're longer than ever. Where 11,000-foot trains were rare, now two-mile monsters are common, in rural communities where crossings might be a mile apart. A stalled train can split a town in half, blocking emergency vehicles or forcing a 4-mile detour just to grab your kid from school. Right now, with a two-man crew, someone's always on scene, actively working to resolve the problem and get that train moving, it never is a fast process, but there is always someone on scene working to get it done. If the conductor's gone, the railroad's plan is what? a response team sent from who-knows-where—always slower than having someone right there. That delay hits everyone who uses a crossing,

So, I ask you to think about safety—ours and yours—and efficiency. A two-man crew keeps trains running smoother and communities connected. Please support SB723.