

Thank you for allowing me to write in, due to situations that couldn't be avoided, I was unable to attend in person today.

My name is Jessica and my husband has a locomotive engineer. Our family has made a lot of sacrifices for him to do his job and do it safely. He has missed many of events most would deem unforgivable, however our children and myself understand the importance to our economy that this job is done and done well.

One night in particular, I laid in bed, our 4 children sound asleep around 1:30am and I could hear my husband's whistle over the fields between our house and the tracks. The farming community we lived were all fast asleep. It was late August during a drought year, especially dry. My husband's conductor alerted him to a farmer trying to flag them down. Turns out some lose metal in a mostly empty car was causing sparks to fly out, in danger of falling onto the dry fields all around. Where families slept. Where our crops grew. Our livestock grazed. What would have happened without my husband being able to see that side of the train as he ran down the track? What would have become of the community in which his family slept soundly?

This is one example of where anything less than a 2 person crew could have ended badly for an entire community. Who knows how out of control that fire could have been, how many towns it would have reached, homes destroyed, animals and livelihoods lost, families lost.

Lastly, let not forget about the safety of the crew themselves. I have been there in times where a man had a stroke during a run. He needed the extra person on board to help facilitate the emergency. I do not want my husband to be alone. Sometimes it comes down to minutes that make a difference between life and death. We love our community, we support our economy, we care about the people that need the freight being moved, over nights, through pandemics, on Christmas', birthdays, sporting events, school events, graduations. We are willing and gladly give up our time with him for the greater good. Please don't take my husband, my kids' dad away from us forever because he's alone on a train.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Keene