

Submitter:	Scott Palmer
On Behalf Of:	SB-723
Committee:	Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	SB723

On a freezing winter night, on a BNSF freight train originating in Klamath Falls, my train became uncoupled. The rear half of the train then collided uncontrollably with the front half, injuring both myself as the Locomotive Engineer and my conductor. As we had multiple loads of various kinds of Hazardous Material, the conductor had to walk the train to inspect the cars. I was required to stay on the engine not only to prevent unwanted movement, but also because the engine radio could contact the train dispatcher in Fort Worth, Texas, whereas the conductor's portable "walkie-talkie" could not.

During the inspection, the conductor encountered a leaking tank car of Vinyl Chloride. The gas burned his lungs to the extent that he required immediate medical attention. I relayed this information to Fort Worth and I began securing the portion of train closest to me while he made his way back to the engines. We cut the engines off the train and ran to the nearest town where we were both transported to the hospital. As a result of that incident, I was off injured for nine months and my conductor was medically retired with broken vertebrae and difficulty breathing.

Now let's play that scenario with one crew; The injured Engineer walks back and is overcome with gas and dies.

Or, if we use the "roving Conductor" the Carriers propose: The leaking tank car vents freely into the atmosphere for several hours while the roving conductor drives 150 miles to the train.

Two-person crews are a must for Oregon, for our waterways and farms and for the communities we travel through. Any less and we are rolling the dice each time a train departs a yard.