



Kathleen Bisbikis
National President

Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Auxiliary

7367 Stabulis Rd • Valley Springs, CA 95252
HOME: (209) 786-7367 • CELL: (209) 559-2251
Biz4413@gmail.com • www.bletauxiliary.net

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HB2970 Oregon Two-Person Crew Bill

It is with a strong belief in the importance of this bill that I add my support to the Oregon Two-Person Crew Bill HB2970.

This bill is not intended to “create jobs”, as the rail carrier might have you believe, this bill is to address the safety of the people and communities in which trains run, the environment that is threatened should a derailment happen, and the personal safety of the crew members who run these trains 24/7/365 ensuring our commodities get to their destination, silently taken for granted in the background of our day to day lives.

The crew members consist of the Engineer, who runs the train and whose job is to adhere to all rules and requirements while en route; and the Conductor, who assists the Engineer in staying in compliance with all requirements; handles the train cars if there is any necessary switching en route; or in the event of a breakdown or derailment can tie portions of the train down to prevent any runaway cars. The Conductor may also cut the crossings and coordinate with first responders while providing information about the contents of the cars (including hazardous materials cars) within the train and their approximate positions.

The Engineer is only accessible on the head end and cannot leave the locomotive to accomplish the same duties the Conductor is currently responsible for. Neither can the Engineer tie the train down or cut crossings by him/herself. It requires at least two people on the train to accomplish this task, which is the current standard on every train and light engine.

Do we take a chance and gamble by reducing crew sizes with fatigue and exhaustion remaining the enemy of our train crews? How many crews or citizens must die or be injured to prove whether one person on a train will improve safety as the carriers assert? The carriers brag about their safety statistics. They comment on their policies and their technology, but rarely do they tip their hats to the professional train crews who actually make it all happen.

As the wife, daughter and aunt of men who have dedicated their lives to make sure that America's freight makes it safely to its destination without injury or disaster to those communities in which they travel I believe that the Two-Person Crew bill is not a negotiable piece of legislation but should be a mandated law. Public and train crew safety and security, along with the protection of our environment are enhanced with two sets of eyes on the head end of every train and light engine. I ask that you please support HB2970.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Bisbikis