

Oppose Legislative Efforts to Mandate Train Crew Size: Supporting Facts

- ✓ **The Federal Railroad Administration — the nation’s rail safety agency — recently ruled there is no need for a federal crew size regulation as there are no data to show operations with two people in the locomotive are any safer than those with one.** After five years of analysis, the FRA ruled that such policy would “impede the future of rail innovation and automation.” The ruling “is an affirmative decision not to regulate with the intention to preempt state laws.”
- ✓ **Crew size is not a safety issue.** Many rail carriers — including both short line railroads and passenger railroads — already operate safely with one person in the locomotive.
- ✓ **Investigators do not attribute any rail incidents, major or minor, to crew size.** This includes the oft-cited Lac-Mégantic accident in 2013, which the Transportation Safety Board of Canada [attributed](#) to 18 causes and contributing factors — none of which included the one-person crew.
- ✓ **Railroads are safe and continue to improve safety.** Since 2008, the train accident rate is down 23%; equipment-caused accident rate is down 16%; track-caused accident rate is down 40% to an all-time low; derailment rate is down 23%; and hazmat accident rate is down 41%.
- ✓ **Safety gains in the industry coincide with reductions in crew size.** As technology has improved, freight railroads have reduced crew sizes via collective bargaining from five to three to two. Incidents have decreased throughout this period, especially accidents attributable to human error, which are down 39% since 2000.
- ✓ **Crew size is a matter of collective bargaining.** Labor and management have bargained over crew size for 100 years under the processes of the Railway Labor Act.
- ✓ **In a rapidly changing transportation sector spurring the transformation of freight rail operations, carriers require flexibility and can be relied on to devise safe procedures.** In deploying different crew models, railroads will address concerns on matters such as grade crossings, operating switches, and handling accidents — just as they have in the past when, for example, implementing remote control operations.
- ✓ **For the sake of their own safety, train crews are not expected to, nor are they trained to, serve as first responders.** Safety protocols instruct crews to do three things following a derailment involving hazardous materials: secure the train, secure the area and evacuate the area.
- ✓ **Technology enables workers to do their jobs better and safer and should be embraced if it is more reliable and reduces human error.** For instance, PTC — which will automatically stop a train before certain accidents caused by human error can occur — will ultimately cause redundancies, and railroads need flexibility to redeploy resources created by the technology.

18 Contributing Factors to Lac-Mégantic



Locomotive

- Mechanical problems not remedied
- Non-standard engine repair failure
- Locomotive engine fire
- Safety device not wired to initiate braking



Tank Cars

- Breached tank cars
- Highly volatile crude oil



Transport Canada

- Inadequate oversight of operational changes
- Limited follow-up on safety deficiencies
- Ineffective SMS audit program



Derailment

- Excessive train speed for track



Train Securement

- Insufficient hand brakes
- Improper hand brake test
- Independent air brakes leaked off



MM&A Railway

- Train left unattended on hill
- No additional safety defenses
- Ineffective training
- Ineffective oversight on train securement
- Weak safety culture
- SMS not fully implemented
- Not effectively managing risks