



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

June 16, 2026

The Honorable Daniel J. McKee
Governor, State of Rhode Island
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Request for Veto of H7608 and S2913 – Railroad Crew Size Legislation

Dear Governor McKee,

On behalf of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA), I respectfully urge you to veto H7608 and S2913 when they reach your desk.

ASLRRRA is the non-profit trade association representing the interests of the Nation's 600 Class II and Class III railroads, commonly referred to as short line and regional railroads. Short lines operate nearly 50,000 route miles in the United States, or approximately 30% of the national freight network, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. ASLRRRA advocates for enlightened public policies which promote a strong regional and short line rail component for the national transportation infrastructure. The State of Rhode Island is unique in our national freight rail network, as it is served by only one freight railroad, the Providence & Worcester Railroad, a Class III short line railroad.

Train crew size is already regulated at the federal level nationwide by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). In 2024, the FRA adopted a comprehensive final rule establishing minimum safety requirements for the size of train crews depending on the type of operation, codified in 49 CFR part 218. Additionally, the FRA rule includes requirements for railroads who had one-person crew operations prior to 2024 and a special approval process for railroads that seek to initiate certain new one-person train crew operations. This federal framework allows regulators to evaluate operational safety based on actual risk assessments, technological advancements, and operational realities rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate.

Railroads are large networks that produce efficiencies through seamless operations across state lines—a shipper's carload of freight can move across the country without stopping, benefiting both the shipper and the public. If Rhode Island were to impose crew-size requirements that are not mandated by neighboring states, it would reduce those efficiencies and burden interstate

commerce. Federal courts have repeatedly recognized the strong federal interest in maintaining uniform standards governing railroad operations.

More generally, trains moving between states with differing crew-size requirements would need to stop to add or remove crew members, causing railroads to incur additional costs for rest facilities and crew transportation and—ultimately—reducing efficiencies for shippers and the public. And these burdens on interstate commerce are entirely unreasonable. Under H7608 and S2913, it would not matter whether operating with a single crew member is just as safe as operating with multiple crew members, whether a railroad operates with a single crew member in adjacent states, or even whether the railroad had a collective bargaining agreement permitting single-person operations.

For these reasons, ASLRRA respectfully requests that you veto H7608 and S2913, recognizing that train crew staffing remains under the comprehensive federal regulatory framework that is already in place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Baker', with a horizontal line underneath.

Chuck Baker
President
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