



Oil Creek & Titusville Lines

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February 2, 2016

Mr. David J. Kozak; Legislative Research Analyst
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
212 Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Via e-mail: Dkozak@pahousegop.com

Re: House Bill 1742

Dear Mr. Kozak:

The Oil Creek & Titusville Lines (OCTL) is a short line railroad located in Crawford and Venango counties, operating on 16 miles of track. We provide freight rail service to several industries in Titusville, PA from a connection with the Norfolk Southern Rwy. and the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad at Rouseville, PA.

We are strongly opposed to H.B. 1742. As a small railroad operating in a challenging economy, and facing ever greater and more expensive industry regulations, it would be a hardship to our operation to not be able to operate single-man train crews when operating conditions and economics dictate.

At one time, trains were operated with five-man crews. As steam locomotives gave way to diesel, and other technological advances were made, crew size shrunk to three, then two and now sometimes one – all while achieving a greater level of over-all safety.

Currently, almost all OCTL trains operate with a two man crew. However, there are times when we put the conductor out ahead of the train, in a truck on the road, to clear snow and ice from crossings and switches in advance of the train. Given that we only have two full-time employees and our freight trains operate at 10 MPH, there are times when this makes the most efficient use of manpower and resources in order to provide timely, reliable service at the lowest possible cost- a necessity for small operations such as ours.

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The trucking industry is able to operate their trucks with only one person in the cab, and their drivers have more to contend with in terms of traffic, road signs, steering, etc., than do our locomotive engineers who operate short trains on familiar track at low speeds. As we have learned on the railroad, adding a second person to the cab of a tractor trailer would not increase safety. However, mandating a second person in the locomotive cab, as is called for in H.B. 1742, would not only fail to increase safety, but it would create an unfair competitive disparity between railroads and trucking companies.

Therefore, we respectfully oppose this bill, and urge others to do the same, because it will only add cost without achieving an actual, demonstrable safety benefit.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Patterson
Manager, Operations & Marketing

cc: Robert O. Dingman, Jr.; President, OCTL
John Burch; Executive Director, Keystone State Railroad Association
Eric Bugaille; Executive Director, PA House Transportation Committee
Meredith Biggica; Executive Director, PA House Transportation Committee