Proponent Testimony for HB 186

Blocked Crossings

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman McClain and members of the House Transportation & Public Safety Committee I would like to thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to give testimony in favor of House Bill 186 in reference to blocked crossings. I would also like to thank the first responders that keep us safe daily.

My name is Kurt Schwamberger I am the Legislative Representative for SMART Local 1529 out of Walbridge, Ohio. I have been a conductor for CSXT for fifteen years. When I hired on the railroad it was standard procedure as a good steward to the public to make accommodations to not block crossings in the event you were going to be stopped for long periods of time.

I have been a resident of the Village of Millbury in Lake Township for thirty years. The Village of Millbury is split by the Norfolk Southern mainline. Norfolk Southern has received higher volumes of traffic on this line in the recent future that has caused logistical difficulties for the Village. However, Norfolk Southern has been parking trains for long periods of time blocking the entire town.

Lake Township has a volunteer fire department that has been running since 1991 when the Millbury Fire Department and Walbridge Fire Department joined together. In the case of an emergency in the Village of Millbury, the response time for first responders is multiplied exponentially when blocked at every crossing in town. A call that would be half a mile to mile from the fire department could require fire or life squad an extra three to five miles and ten minutes or more to make it on location.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Kurt Schwamberger

Legislative Representative

SMART 1529