To the Members of the House,

I want to take this time to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address my support for House Bill 186, which is right now under consideration.

I am a conductor for CSX Transportation and a member of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Union Local 1397 in Columbus, Ohio. I come to you today to address the dire safety and economic issues if this Bill were not to pass.

Since before I could remember, I have always wanted to work for the railroad. When I had the opportunity after High School, I began my journey in railroading. I missed graduation ceremonies to train as a crew caller and 17 years later, I stand before you as a proud conductor of an industry that moves this country.

The carriers feel that my job is not necessary, that they need to be competitive with technology and the trucking industry. I am here to tell you that is not true. The railroads, more than ever are posting record profits and with two crew members, a train carrying over 200 containers is far more competitive than a single truck.

When it comes to safety, I can tell you first-hand that two people in the cab proves more safer than one. I have been there when the so-called safety device, known as Positive Train Control has failed. I have been there when PTC does not recognize a territory and stops our train. I have been there when PTC allows a train over 2,000 feet past a signal before engaging. This, if it were a stop signal, would have allowed the train to pass onto the main line.

Safety is paramount. Not only for the employees that operate the trains, but for the people in the communities that we serve. As a volunteer for Operation Lifesaver, I provide safety presentations to the general public on rail safety. A conductor is the first line of communication and action when there is a railway grade crossing accident. We assess the situation and, if needed, provide first aid until emergency personnel arrive.

As for the economic impact, the median salary for a conductor is $63,000. If the railroads get their way, you are looking at a large impact to the local, state and federal level. I ask you, if you allow the railroads to go to one person crews, who will fill the gap on taxes paid? Who will buy the goods that the railroads ship? This will not only impact taxes, but local businesses.

I ask you to strongly consider the passing of this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Ryan J. Fitzpatrick

Conductor

SMART-TD Local 1397