



CITY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
317 South Washington
Wellington, Kansas 67152

February 16, 2015

The Honorable Mike Peterson
Chairman of Committee on Transportation
Distinguished Members of the Committee
Kansas State Legislature Senate
State Capitol, Room 345-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: **SB 164**--AN ACT Requiring two employees for train operation.

Dear Senator Peterson and Members of the Committee:

The City of Wellington, Kansas wants to be on record as a strong proponent of SB 164.

This legislation is not only about the safety of the public and the safety of railroad operating crews. While we believe it is an opportunity to prevent what in our opinion is an unsafe operating practice, we also believe that this measure will not only protect our communities from the potential and documented loss of life and property, but it will also protect many jobs in Wellington and other communities where there is a strong railroading presence.

The Federal Railroad Administrator stated "We believe that safety is enhanced with the use of a multiple person crew. And safety dictates that you never allow a single point of failure, ensuring that trains are adequately staffed for the type of service operated."

There have been numerous train accidents that are linked with one-man crews. Railroads use two person crews under contract right now, but that contract will expire and labor unions and railroads may someday get what each other want's by cutting public safety out of the equations. However, that does not have to happen under our watch. A requirement for two operators in the cab of a locomotive is essential for public safety. If crossings need to be opened for emergencies where a train is blocking traffic, we cannot see how this task can be done with one man operating the engine and having to disconnect or reconnect railroad cars at the same time. The time requirement alone could be critical, but in inclement weather it could also be life threatening for both the train personnel as well as the citizen(s) needing emergency assistance. This is especially critical in every city and town where there is a railroad presence. The City of Wellington has had instances where five (5) crossing were blocked at the same time, so we know what a one-man crew would do if a critical situation occurred.

While safety is of paramount importance, we must not forget the revenue loss in cargo, both incoming and outgoing, should a rail accident occur. That impacts local, regional, state and national businesses and government in revenue loss, as well as hazardous material related issues. The great State of Kansas cannot afford to be party to such potential ramifications due to lack of safety controls that we can prevent by passing Senate Bill 164.

The City of Wellington respectfully asks that you don't allow labor unions or corporations to make this decision about such an important public safety issue over a contract table. We ask that you, our elected officials, make a decision for citizens, crews, protection of cargo, and for public safety. Please Support Senate Bill 164.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roy A. Eckert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roy A. Eckert
City Manager
City of Wellington, Kansas