# *Single Employee Train Crews & Passenger Rail*

Some advocates of single employee crews for freight operations – including Frank Wilner -- are pointing to passenger train operations (including Amtrak) that use a single engineer in the cab of the locomotive as evidence that freight train operations would be safe and efficient with a lone employee aboard. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no comparison between what the freight industry is proposing and currently existing passenger operations.

Passenger train operations that utilize a single crew member in the locomotive cab always have a train crew of at least one other certified and qualified crew member on board the train at all times. The additional crew member(s) assist the locomotive engineer with many critical aspects of the job, too many to go into given space considerations. The proposed freight service operations make no provision for *any other employee to be on the train at any time.* In addition, passenger locomotive engineers who do run the train -- alone in the cab -- are not subject to the conditions of freight engineers. These include the following:

- Passenger engineers have fixed schedules, making for routine and predictable on-duty and off-duty times as well as defined layovers periods at both the home and away from home terminals. Freight engineers begin and end their tour of duty at random times 24/7/365. No two tour-of-duty start and end times are the same. There is little predictability to a freight engineer's schedule. Studies have proven that having no fixed schedule dramatically increases crew fatigue and the likelihood of forgetfulness, mistakes, and accidents.

- Most passenger and commuter train engineers work during normal waking hours. Very few passenger trains operate from midnight to 5 AM. Freight engineers regularly work at night.

- Extra board passenger engineers have a much better sense of when and where they will be called and used. Generally, passenger train start times are published and adhered to. Therefore, an extra board passenger engineer has a reasonably good idea if and when s/he might be called to work. A freight engineer -- extra board or even "pool" -- often has little idea of when s/he may be called to work, and must "protect" the board 24/7.

- All long distance Amtrak trains that do run throughout the night have an engineer and a co-engineer working together in the locomotive cab. Freight train engineers would be expected to routinely run trains through the night alone, with *no one* in the cab to assist.

- Passenger engineers work scheduled runs, and lone engineer runs are usually scheduled for less than 6 hours. Amtrak crews with two in the cab are usually on duty for no longer than 8 or 10 hours. Freight engineers however, routinely work twelve hours. It is common for a freight engineer to then await transportation to the terminal.

- Passenger engineers at Amtrak all have at least one day a week scheduled off work. Freight engineers generally have no guaranteed regular off days.

The Tentative Agreement on the BNSF that Frank Wilner has been lauding makes no such provisions for engineers who would have to operate alone in the cab of the locomotive.

Because of the unscheduled nature of freight service, the myriad on- and off-duty times, the long hours, the night work, the lack of regularly assigned days off, and the absence of anyone else anywhere on the train to assist, the proposed single employee operations of freight trains on the BNSF has nothing in common with currently existing single engineer passenger service operations.

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