

RESOLUTION NO. 48

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO ONE PERSON REMOTE CONTROL OPERATION OF TRAINS

Introduced: 2/8/10

By Mr. Bullock and Ms. Willingham:

WHEREAS, There has been a growing danger of one person locomotive operations, specifically the use of one person remote control operations (RCO's) throughout the railroad industry and on Mothers' Day of 2009 in the Selkirk, NY Railroad yard, Jared Boehlke, a locomotive remote control operator, was killed while attempting a repair as the sole member of a yard switching crew, and

WHEREAS, If Jared Boehlke had not been assigned to work alone, he would most likely still be alive today as one person remote control operations are complicated and dangerous jobs during which the operator must always check the track list to ensure the right train cars are on the right track; this person alone must always be operating the correct track switches in order to see that the operator's train is going in the right direction, and the operator has no ability to see what is ahead of his engine(s) while operating the engine and answering radio calls and the one person train operator is required to juggle many tasks and do the job safely while dealing with management's production pressures, and

WHEREAS, RCO workers have only an 80 hour training course to receive a simplified certificate while locomotive engineers have far more training (classroom and on the job), sometimes as long as a year, and are federally licensed and governed by strict regulations, and

WHEREAS, Railroads move hazardous freight through towns and rail yards located near populated areas and people living near such areas deserve the utmost consideration for their safety, not cost cutting jobs to make a bit more profit, and

WHEREAS, The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has adopted guidelines for RCO operations but these guidelines do not actually require rail carriers to adopt all the necessary safety procedures and do not go far enough to ensure that this technology is implemented and utilized safely and rail carriers have the ability to "cover up" accidents involving RCO's and this must stop and rail carriers must be required to report all accidents involving any RCO operation to a single FRA oversight group, and the FRA must not solely rely on direct safety inspections by rail carriers, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Albany County Legislature calls on the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to adopt regulations not guidelines for Remote

Control Operation (RCO) of trains and increase oversight of railroad carriers in relation to RCO of trains and the FRA must develop performance measures of effectiveness in an RCO safety program and directly oversee rail carrier management on safety risks, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Albany County Legislature urges the Congressional House Transportation Committee to direct the FRA to ban one person remote control operation of trains and enact enforceable regulations to make RCO of trains safer, and, be it further

RESOLVED That the Clerk of the County Legislature is directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to the appropriate County Officials and to the Federal Railroad Administration, Congressmen James Oberstar and Paul Tonko.

Resolution was withdrawn by sponsors. 2/8/10