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Senate Bill 100 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Erika Geiss  
Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

## **CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Railroad Code to prohibit a train or locomotive engine engaged in transporting freight from operating unless the train or locomotive engine was operated by a crew of at least two individuals. The bill's prohibition would not apply if the train or locomotive engine were operating a locomotive engine in hostler service or in helper service.

Under the bill, "train" would mean one or more locomotive engines, coupled with or without cars, that are required to undergo air brake testing under Federal law. "Helper service" would mean assisting a train that is experiencing a mechanical failure or that is ascending or descending a grade by coupling a locomotive engine to the front or rear of the train. "Hostler service" would mean moving a train or locomotive engine a short distance within a railroad yard or mechanical facility.

Proposed MCL 462.351

## **BRIEF RATIONALE**

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure indicates that, from January 2022 to April 2023, Michigan had five train derailments. Three involved dangerous materials, though none of the cars carrying them were breached; however, in February 2023, a train derailment involving 50 train cars near East Palestine, Ohio, led to the release of hazardous waste. Trains carrying non-hazardous waste also can cause harm if derailed. They may combust, crash into traffic or buildings, and more. To increase railroad safety, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued a rule mandating two-person crews in 2024.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it has been suggested that Michigan align its Railroad Code with Federal regulations.

## **PREVIOUS LEGISLATION**

*(This section does not provide a comprehensive account of previous legislative efforts on this subject matter.)*

The bill is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 767 from the 2021-2022 Legislative Session.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Date Completed: 11-25-24

Fiscal Analyst: Bobby Canell

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<sup>1</sup> Walker, Mark, "U.S. Finalizes Rule Requiring Two-Person Crews on Freight Trains", *The New York Times*, April 2, 2024.