

**April  
2015**

# Minnesota Survey

## Amtrak and Two-Person Crew Legislation



**DFM Research**

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**Topline Results:**

Interviews: 665 residents over the age 18 that reside in Minnesota  
Margin of Error: ±3.8 percentage points  
Interview Dates: April 11-19, 2015  
Sample: Landline and cell phone sample. Random digit numbers provided by Survey Sample International (SSI) of Fairfield, CT. SSI provided 8,000 residential random phone numbers from a pool of listed and unlisted numbers in the boundary area, and 2,250 cell phone numbers; which then were stratified into five distinct geographical regions. Calls conducted by professional callers of Stone Research Services based in Indianapolis, Indiana.  
Survey Sponsor: SMART Transportation Division’s Minnesota Legislative Office

**Q1:** Generally speaking, do you think the country is moving in the right direction, or is the country off on the wrong track?

Right direction ..... **32%**  
 Wrong track ..... **55**  
 (VOL) Unsure ..... **13**

**Q2:** And generally speaking, do you think Minnesota is moving in the right direction, or is Minnesota off on the wrong track?

Right direction ..... **51%**  
 Wrong track ..... **38**  
 (VOL) Unsure ..... **11**

**Q3:** I’m now going to read you names of some public figures and organizations, for each one, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion, and if you never heard of them before, just let me know. (Q3h-k: N=500, MoE ±4.4%pts)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Neutral (VOL)</u>	<u>NHO</u>
<b>Q3a:</b> Barack Obama	<b>42%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q3b:</b> Al Franken	<b>55</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q3c:</b> Amy Klobuchar	<b>64</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Q3d:</b> Mark Dayton	<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Q3h:</b> Minnesota Legislature	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q3i:</b> Republican Party	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q3j:</b> Democratic Party	<b>43</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q3k:</b> Tea Party	<b>25</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>

**Q4:** One topic that has been discussed a lot is the Affordable Care Act of 2010, generally known as ObamaCare. Now that some time has passed since the law has been in effect, generally speaking do you now approve or disapprove of the Affordable Care Act?

Approve ..... **41%**  
 Disapprove ..... **52**  
 (VOL) Neutral ..... **2**  
 (VOL) Unsure ..... **5**

**Q5:** And which would you say best fits your current view of the Affordable Care Act?

The law should be repealed in its entirety .....	<b>26%</b>
The law should be scaled back, but portions kept .....	<b>26</b>
The law should stand as is .....	<b>14</b>
The law should be expanded to provide more coverage .....	<b>28</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>7</b>

**Q6:** And now let's suppose that the 2016 presidential election was held today and the candidates were Hilary Clinton for the Democrats and Scott Walker for the Republicans; for whom would you vote?

Hilary Clinton .....	<b>44%</b>
Scott Walker .....	<b>43</b>
(VOL) Other .....	<b>6</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>7</b>

**Q7:** Now let's suppose the candidates were Hilary Clinton for the Democrats and Ted Cruz for the Republicans, for whom would you vote?

Hilary Clinton .....	<b>47%</b>
Ted Cruz .....	<b>37</b>
(VOL) Other .....	<b>6</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>10</b>

**Q8:** As you may know, Minnesota has nearly a Two Billion Dollar state budget surplus. There are several ideas out there on what to do with the surplus; generally speaking, which option do you prefer most?

Use most of the surplus for transportation and education .....	<b>55%</b>
Rebate most of the surplus back to taxpayers .....	<b>37</b>
(VOL) Unsure/ Other .....	<b>7</b>

**General Transportation Question Series**

**Q10:** I'm now going to read you some additional names, for each one, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion, and if you never heard of them before, just let me know.  
 (Q10b-j: N=480, MoE ±4.5%pts)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Neutral (VOL)</u>	<u>NHO</u>
<b>Q10a:</b> Amtrak	<b>69%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Q10b:</b> High Speed Rail	<b>54</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Q10c:</b> Public Transportation	<b>82</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q10d:</b> Light Rail Transportation	<b>69</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q10e:</b> Minnesota DOT	<b>67</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Q10f:</b> Freight Railroads, BNSF	<b>61</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Q10g:</b> Transporting Oil by Rail	<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q10h:</b> Labor Unions	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q10i:</b> Chamber of Commerce	<b>60</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Q10j:</b> the NRA	<b>51</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

Now I have a few questions on other rail and transportation related issues.

**Q11:** Now thinking about Minnesota's transportation infrastructure – including roads, bridges, rail, air and public transportation – how would you rate it?

Excellent .....	<b>2%</b>
Good .....	<b>29</b>
Satisfactory .....	<b>39</b>
Poor .....	<b>21</b>
Failing .....	<b>7</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>2</b>

**Q12:** And when it comes to spending on transportation needs here in Minnesota, do you think the government spends too much, about the right amount, or not enough on transportation needs.

Too much .....	<b>11%</b>
About the right amount .....	<b>33</b>
Not enough .....	<b>51</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>6</b>

**Amtrak/Passenger Rail Question Series**

**Q13a:** Currently Amtrak has one daily passenger train route in Minnesota, known as the Empire Builder, with service to Chicago and Seattle. When it comes to passenger rail service here in Minnesota, which best fits your view?

Passenger rail service should increase .....	<b>40%</b>
Passenger rail service should remain the same .....	<b>42</b>
Passenger rail service should be eliminated .....	<b>7</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>10</b>

**Q13b:** Some have proposed the idea of additional train service between the Twin Cities and Chicago. Generally speaking, do you find this an idea you can support?

Yes / Support .....	<b>56%</b>
No / Oppose .....	<b>35</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>9</b>

**Q13c:** Another idea some are proposing is three-times a week service between outstate regional centers like Rochester, Mankato, Wilmar, Northern Minnesota to the Twin Cities and back. Generally speaking do you find this an idea that you can support? (Asked only to respondents that live in Congressional Districts 1, 2, and 7: N=246, MoE ±6.3%pts)

Yes / Support .....	<b>74%</b>
No / Oppose .....	<b>21</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>6</b>

**Q13d:** And now let's suppose there was three-times a week service between an outstate regional center near you and the Twin Cities. How likely would you leave your car at the rail station and take passenger rail service to the Twin Cities and back? (Asked only to respondents that live in Congressional Districts 1, 2, and 7: N=246, MoE ±6.3%pts)

Very Likely .....	<b>17%</b>
Fairly Likely .....	<b>15</b>
Just Somewhat Likely .....	<b>23</b>
Not Very Likely .....	<b>42</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>2</b>

**Q14:** Critics of Amtrak point out that the federal government spends over \$1 billion dollars per year to subsidize passenger rail service – about 25 percent of its total budget -- and that as a nation we can no longer afford Amtrak and its national rail network.

Congress has to vote to reauthorize federal support for passenger rail. One amendment proposed is to eliminate ALL Amtrak funding, which would mean no passenger rail service here in Minnesota and most of America. Suppose you could vote on this amendment, would you?

Support the amendment, eliminating all Amtrak funding .....	<b>19%</b>
Oppose the amendment, keeping Amtrak funded at current levels .	<b>72</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>9</b>

**Rail Safety Question Series**

**Q15:** How worried are you about a train derailling in your community?

Very Worried .....	<b>5%</b>
Fairly Worried .....	<b>7</b>
Just Somewhat Worried .....	<b>15</b>
Not that Worried .....	<b>73</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>1</b>

**Q16:** Based on what you know, how many people do you think operate a freight train that travels through Minnesota?

1 .....	<b>5%</b>
2 .....	<b>23</b>
3 .....	<b>20</b>
4 or more .....	<b>36</b>
Don't know .....	<b>16</b>

Currently most freight trains in Minnesota operate with a crew of two people; but now there are efforts by some railroads to reduce the crew to just one person on some trains.

**Q17:** When it comes to railroad safety and operations, do you think a train with a crew of one individual can be operated as safe as a train with a crew of two individuals?

Yes, one operator can be as safe as two .....	<b>7%</b>
No, one operator cannot be as safe .....	<b>87</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>6</b>

**Q18:** Now lets suppose freight trains in your area operated with only a crew of one, now how worried would you be about a train derailling in your community?

Very Worried .....	<b>24%</b>
Fairly Worried .....	<b>20</b>
Just Somewhat Worried .....	<b>26</b>
Not that Worried .....	<b>28</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>2</b>

**Two-Person Train Crew Question Series**

Federal legislation was introduced in 2013 which would require all freight trains to operate with a crew of at least two people. This bill was known as H.R. 3040, The Safe Freight Act. Congress took no action in 2014, and now some are looking to the states to take action.

**Q19:** Here in Minnesota, Senate File 918, a two-person train crew bill was introduced which would require all freight trains operating in Minnesota to have a crew of at least two. Suppose you could vote on this legislation; would you vote YES to pass SF 918, or would you vote NO and reject SF 918?

Yes, pass .....	<b>88%</b>
No, reject .....	<b>9</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>4</b>

**Q20:** I now want to read you a few reasons why some would like to see SF 918 - requiring a crew of two people on all freight trains in Minnesota become law. For each one, tell me if you find it a convincing or not that convincing reason to pass SF 918: (Respondents asked 3 of 5 from question 20 series: N=400, MoE ±4.9%pts)

**Q20a:** It takes two crew members to properly secure a train when that train is going to be left unattended.

Convincing .....	<b>65%</b>
Not that convincing .....	<b>26</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>8</b>

**Q20b:** Having two crew members on a train provides better monitoring of traffic at road crossings.

Convincing .....	<b>77%</b>
Not that convincing .....	<b>18</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>5</b>

**Q20c:** Having two people on a train allows the crew members to supervise and communicate with each other to help avoid mistakes that may contribute to an accident.

Convincing .....	<b>87%</b>
Not that convincing .....	<b>9</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>4</b>

**Q20d:** The Federal Railroad Administration has stated that multiple person crews enhance safety.

Convincing .....	<b>82%</b>
Not that convincing .....	<b>13</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>6</b>

**Q20e:** According to federal regulations, the engineer is not allowed to leave the locomotive cab while operating the train. A second crew member is necessary to investigate incidents such as derailment or a collision between a train and a motor vehicle at a crossing.

Convincing .....	<b>80%</b>
Not that convincing .....	<b>16</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>4</b>

**Q21:** I now want to read you a few reasons why some DO NOT want to see SF 918 - requiring a crew of two people on all freight trains in Minnesota become law. For each reason, tell me if you find it a convincing or not that convincing reason to NOT PASS SF 918: (Respondents asked 3 of 5 from question 21 series: N=400, MoE ±4.9%pts)

**Q21a:** Train crew size is addressed in the collective bargaining process between management and labor, and a law is not needed.

Convincing .....	15%
Not that convincing .....	78
(VOL) Unsure .....	7

**Q21b:** Commuter rail operates thousands of trains a day with one person in the locomotive, and the data going back to the 1970s shows an excellent safety record.

Convincing .....	34%
Not that convincing .....	59
(VOL) Unsure .....	7

**Q21c:** In 2009, the Federal Railroad Administration found no factual evidence to support the prohibition against one-person operation of trains.

Convincing .....	15%
Not that convincing .....	79
(VOL) Unsure .....	6

**Q21d:** If two-person train crew legislation passes, it will hinder investment and implementation of safe, cost-saving technology like Positive Train Control, which is advanced technology designed to automatically stop a train before certain types of accidents?

Convincing .....	27%
Not that convincing .....	67
(VOL) Unsure .....	6

**Q21e:** If two-person train crew legislation passes, Minnesota industries and shippers will be at a competitive disadvantage with respect to other states that do not have two-person crew restrictions.

Convincing .....	18%
Not that convincing .....	77
(VOL) Unsure .....	5

**Q22:** Now considering everything you just heard about SF 918, the two-person train crew bill. If you could vote on this once again, would you vote YES to pass SF 918, or would you vote NO and reject SF 918?

Yes, pass .....	83%
No, reject .....	12
(VOL) Unsure .....	5



**Key Demographic Crosstab Questions**

**D1:** When it comes to political parties, do you consider yourself a:

Democrat .....	<b>32%</b>
an Independent .....	<b>38</b>
Republican .....	<b>30</b>

**D2:** When it comes to your political philosophy, which do you consider yourself:

Liberal .....	<b>21%</b>
Moderate .....	<b>38</b>
Conservative .....	<b>37</b>
Tea Party .....	<b>4</b>

**Q13:** I now want to ask a few questions about Amtrak and passenger rail. Thinking back the past two years or so, how often would you say you have been a passenger on Amtrak?

Never .....	<b>84%</b>
One to Two Times .....	<b>11</b>
Three to Five Times .....	<b>3</b>
More than Five Times .....	<b>2</b>

## Selected Crosstabs

**Q8:** As you may know, Minnesota has nearly a Two Billion Dollar state budget surplus. There are several ideas out there on what to do with the surplus; generally speaking, which option do you prefer most?

Use most of the surplus for transportation and education ..... **55%**  
 Rebate most of the surplus back to taxpayers ..... **37**  
 (VOL) Unsure/ Other ..... **7**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	51%	40	9
Women	59	35	6

<u>Age</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-39	55	37	7
40-64	53	40	8
65 plus	62	30	8

<u>Education</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
High School/Less	50	43	7
Some College/AA Degree	57	37	5
Bachelor/Graduate Degree	58	32	10

<u>Race</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
White/Caucasians	55	36	8
All Others	54	44	2

<u>Region</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Twin City Urban	60	36	5
Twin City Suburban	51	39	10
Southern Minnesota	60	38	2
Western Minnesota	57	36	7
Northern Minnesota	54	32	13

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Rebate</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	73	23	4
Independent	57	34	9
Republican	34	57	9

**Q14:** Critics of Amtrak point out that the federal government spends over \$1 billion dollars per year to subsidize passenger rail service – about 25 percent of its total budget -- and that as a nation we can no longer afford Amtrak and its national rail network.

Congress has to vote to reauthorize federal support for passenger rail. One amendment proposed is to eliminate ALL Amtrak funding, which would mean no passenger rail service here in Minnesota and most of America. Suppose you could vote on this amendment, would you?

Support the amendment, eliminating all Amtrak funding ..... **19%**  
 Oppose the amendment, keeping Amtrak funded at current levels . **72**  
 (VOL) Unsure ..... **9**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	27%	66	7
Women	12	77	11

<u>Age</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-39	21	71	8
40-64	20	71	9
65 plus	14	76	10

<u>Education</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
High School/Less	17	71	12
Some College/AA Degree	22	72	6
Bachelor/Graduate Degree	19	73	9

<u>Race</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
White/Caucasians	17	74	9
All Others	31	59	10

<u>Region</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Twin City Urban	23	66	11
Twin City Suburban	19	72	9
Southern Minnesota	21	71	8
Western Minnesota	14	78	8
Northern Minnesota	16	79	6

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	11	84	5
Independent	19	71	10
Republican	28	60	12

<u>Amtrak Passenger Status</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Not a Past Passenger	21	69	10
Passenger	10	87	3

**Q18:** Now lets suppose freight trains in your area operated with only a crew of one, now how worried would you be about a train derailling in your community?

Very Worried .....	<b>24%</b>
Fairly Worried .....	<b>20</b>
Just Somewhat Worried .....	<b>26</b>
Not that Worried .....	<b>28</b>
(VOL) Unsure .....	<b>2</b>

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
Men	21%	20	24	34
Women	27	21	27	23

<u>Age</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
18-39	19	16	30	33
40-64	26	22	24	25
65 plus	26	22	23	26

<u>Education</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
High School/Less	25	18	27	28
Some College/AA Degree	26	24	23	26
Bachelor/Graduate Degree	21	20	27	30

<u>Race</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
White/Caucasians	23	19	26	30
All Others	29	26	26	17

<u>Region</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
Twin City Urban	23	22	26	29
Twin City Suburban	23	22	27	25
Southern Minnesota	25	18	24	34
Western Minnesota	23	18	26	29
Northern Minnesota	28	17	22	30

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Smwht</u>	<u>Not</u>
Democrat	34	22	23	21
Independent	21	20	25	30
Republican	16	20	30	32

**Q22:** Now considering everything you just heard about SF 918, the two-person train crew bill. If you could vote on this once again, would you vote YES to pass SF 918, or would you vote NO and reject SF 918?

Yes, pass ..... **83%**  
 No, reject ..... **12**  
 (VOL) Unsure ..... **5**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	80%	16	4
Women	86	9	5

  

<u>Age</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-39	83	12	5
40-64	81	14	5
65 plus	88	7	4

  

<u>Education</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
High School/Less	83	10	7
Some College/AA Degree	86	11	3
Bachelor/Graduate Degree	80	15	5

  

<u>Race</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
White/Caucasians	85	11	4
All Others	72	21	7

  

<u>Region</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Twin City Urban	81	13	6
Twin City Suburban	83	13	5
Southern Minnesota	88	6	5
Western Minnesota	84	11	5
Northern Minnesota	84	13	2

  

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	89	8	3
Independent	80	13	7
Republican	80	15	5

## Methodology

The survey results presented in this report are based on a stratified random sample of 665 Minnesota residents; the sample was stratified by five distinct regions to ensure a representative sample of the public. The percentage allocated for each region was based on the most recent Census Bureau state population estimates.

- 26% - Twin City Urban (Congressional Districts 4 and 5)
- 37% - Twin City Suburban and Exurban (Congressional Districts 2, 3, and 6)
- 12% - Southern Minnesota (Congressional District 1)
- 12% - Western Minnesota (Congressional District 7)
- 13% - Northern Minnesota (Congressional District 8)

After the numbers were stratified into the appropriate region, telephone numbers were then selected by random using a skip pattern to guarantee that the interviews were distributed throughout the region. Each number in the stratified sample had the same non-zero chance of being selected for an interview.

Telephone interviews were conducted by trained staff of Stone Research Services of Indianapolis, Indiana, using a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) system for landline phones. Cell phone interviews are dialed manually to comply with the Telemarketing Consumer Protection Act of 1991. To ensure everyone in the household would have an equal chance of being selected, callers would ask to interview the resident over the age of 18 who had the most recent birthday.

Final results are weighted based on gender, age, race, and education to conform to the approximate population based on U.S. Census Bureau demographic data.

<u>Gender</u>		<u>Age</u>		<u>Education</u>	
Male	49%	18-39	37%	High School/Less	34%
Female	51%	40-64	46%	Some College/AA	33%
		65+	17%	Bachelor/Graduate	33%
<u>Race</u>					
White/Caucasian	85%				
All Others	15%				

The final results presented are subject to sampling error, which is the difference between results obtained from the survey and those that would be obtained if everyone in the target population were interviewed. The sampling error, commonly known as the margin of error, is  $\pm 3.8$  percentage points with a 95 percent confidence level; meaning that in 19 out of 20 times, the individual responses would be within the margin of error (confidence interval). If final results of a question resulted in a tabulated answer of 50 percent, the confidence interval would be between 46.2 to 53.8 percent. Where appropriate, question and answer choices are randomized to reduce order bias; due to rounding, results may not equal 100 percent.

Project management and final analysis of the data was completed by Dean Mitchell of DFM Research based in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In addition to his 24 years of political experience, Dean has completed course work in survey techniques and statistics as part of his Master in Public Policy (MPP) degree from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs.