

Dangerous and Dirty - Oil Trains!

We are in the crosshairs. Every day mile-long trains, some 100 cars or more, carry dangerous Bakken Shale crude oil through OUR COMMUNITY and the volumes are expanding. We are at risk every day due to the danger of pollution, accidents and explosion from oil trains.

The tank cars are substandard and prone to explode when derailed. The National Transportation Safety Board found that DOT-111 tank cars, the most commonly used, puncture easily when derailed, often exploding. The newer cars, CPC 1232s, have recently exploded as well, making it clear that no tank cars being used to carry Bakken crude today are safe.

_____ of residents, workers, and communities are within the ½ mile evacuation zone, many more within the larger potential impact zone should a derailment result in fire. Many people live within the blast zone along train tracks and would be directly impacted by a train derailment, explosion or fire. Many tracks run along rivers and close to water supplies. For an eye-opening interactive map to see how close you are: <http://explosive-crude-by-rail.org/>

The oil is highly volatile and flammable, more likely to catch fire. Federal agencies say Bakken crude oil has unusually high gas content, low flash point, a low boiling point and high vapor pressure, risking catastrophic fire that is difficult or impossible to extinguish. Experts say it should be reclassified to require the use of tank cars designed for hazardous material and volatile gases should be stripped from the oil before being transported by train or by pipeline but the government does not require this and proposed federal rules do not propose this.

Accidents abound. As crude-by-rail traffic has increased, so have accidents, posing significant risks to life, property and the environment – 113 incidents involving crude-by-rail mishaps occurred in 2013. The most devastating was in Lac Megantic, Quebec where 47 people died and much of the town was blown up. So far in just three weeks this winter four fiery derailments occurred in the U.S. and Canada, causing evacuations, fouling rivers and shutting down water supplies; in West Virginia the derailment disaster prompted a State of Emergency. Rushed expansion of crude by rail has largely ignored public safety concerns and pollution consequences. Yet these trains roll through our neighborhoods and up against our water supplies as if their cargo was benign.

Oil train traffic is increasing – the danger has just begun. Bakken Shale oil production is expected to continue to increase from 1 million barrels of oil per day (MMb/d) to approx. 1.4 MMb/d by 2016. Fracking for oil is racing ahead in other shale fields as well. To get the oil to market, much of the domestic crude being extracted is brought on trains to refineries and terminals that are expanding on the Delaware River and further east in New Jersey and New York. Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) in Philadelphia is the largest oil refining complex on the Eastern Seaboard, the largest crude oil rail yard in the U.S., and the largest single customer for crude oil produced from North Dakota's Bakken Shale, processing at least 350,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd). PES, Monroe Refinery in Delaware County, PBF Refinery in Paulsboro, NJ, and the refinery at Delaware City, DE are together refining 862,000 bpd. PES is reportedly increasing its oil refinery production this year, which is expected to increase crude-by-rail traffic in Philadelphia. Many trains coursing through Pennsylvania and New Jersey are going there.

Crude oil pollutes and Bakken crude releases polluting volatile organic compounds (VOCs). According to Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration, more than 1.15 million gallons of crude oil was spilled from rail cars in over 35 tank car accidents in 2013, which is more oil than was spilled in the prior 37 years combined. Higher gas content in Bakken crude oil means more air pollution and methane where the oil is fracked in North Dakota, more VOCs at refineries and terminals, and greater risk of leaked VOCs through the substandard tank car fittings as they travel 1400 miles across the half the nation to the East Coast.

USDOT says more accidents, more lives lost, costing billions. The U.S. Department of Transportation predicts an average of 10 derailments of trains hauling crude oil or ethanol per year over the next two decades, costing hundreds of lives and more than \$4 billion in damages.

We can't wait for the Feds. No substantial changes have been made yet that make a derailment less likely to occur and there is nothing to prevent a catastrophic accident here similar to those that are occurring along the routes these dangerous trains travel. Recently proposed changes to federal regulations allow substandard tank cars to continue to be used and don't provide needed safety measures.

Emergency response planning is inadequate. People don't know about these trains that can explode like bombs, even though they see them rumble by every day. Our Community can take action that will help protect us, improve safety and help prevent a full blown disaster. Special emergency response plans need to be prepared and special equipment made available. For instance, the fires caused by exploding tank cars burn super-hot and can only be contained by foam yet many rural communities are not equipped with foam or don't have enough in storage.

Our Community should adopt the Proposed Resolution. Council member _____ has introduced this resolution. We call on Council to adopt the Resolution to Protect Our Community from the impacts of crude-by-rail. We propose this Resolution to Our Community that calls for an immediate ban on all presently used tank cars; no expansion of oil transport without comprehensive safety analyses and full implementation of maximum safety measures in equipment and operations; voluntary restrictions by carriers of crude oil transport through Our Community (such as lower speeds, fewer cars in trains, highest safety standard braking systems); the disclosure of train schedules and what they carry; and the update of emergency response planning and equipment, including increased public participation.

Our Community needs to develop a Green Energy Economy—it's time for a transition. Our Community needs to recognize the crucial importance of and champion the development of clean, renewable, sustainable, and energy efficient energy sources and stable economic engines that will support the health and longevity of our communities and the water, air, and natural assets that provide the quality and security the region requires to truly thrive and grow.

For more information: