

3/18/08

From: John McLinn
1230 Mallard Lane
Hoffman Estates, Ill. 60192



Dear Mr. Quinlan,

Please find enclosed a brief study of environmental articles I have found referencing CN Railroad and its impact on our environment. I frankly am astonished at the amount and seriousness of this Railroad's ^{crack} history. It took 10 minutes to find. We understand the goal of this proposed acquisition, but, are very worried about 40-50 trains per ~~per~~ day running passed our homes. We fear lowered property values, noise all night long & day long. We fear accidents at the shoe factory road crossings leading west after cresting the hill. We are worried about cracks, smoke, and noise. Won't this many trains hurt the wild life in the Forest Preserve here? and although I've been told that the region is its benefit, I have to emphasize

(2)

the benefit will be on the backs
and at the expense of these towns, people,
and communities bordering this rail line.
Everything I've read about CN and its
way of doing business worries me. No
offense, but they have a very questionable
past.

As an individual home owner along this
route, I can only hope you will consider
the drastic impact this acquisition would
have on our peaceful way of life here.
We are requesting you oppose this
action as it shall be a serious
disruption to our wonderful town of
Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

Best Regards,

John P. McLean

312-590-1009

Surface Transportation Board

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Questions for CN after yet another derailment

Staff Reporter

The Province

Wednesday, August 22, 2007



CN Rail is facing more questions after yet another derailment, even though the latest was a low-speed accident that caused no injuries or environmental damage.

The 10-car derailment in a switching yard in downtown Quesnel occurred just after 6 p.m. Tuesday. The cars left the tracks just before crossing a trestle bridge over the Quesnel River.

There was extensive damage to the rail cars and traffic was delayed for hours in the city's core, but no one was hurt and no dangerous goods or chemicals spilled.

Still, it has the provincial transportation critic saying it's another sign all is not well with CN's safety measures.

For many in B.C. the reaction will be "Oh no, not again," NDP MLA David Chudnovsky told Global News Tuesday.

"It's clear that we have a pattern of operation that puts the safety of British Columbians at risk and puts the environment at risk."

The accident was the second for CN trains this month. Two trains crashed in a railyard in Prince George in early August, resulting in a fiery explosion. No one was hurt in that crash, which was attributed to human error.

Chudnovsky released a five-point plan a few days later that demanded whistleblower legislation to improve CN's safety record.

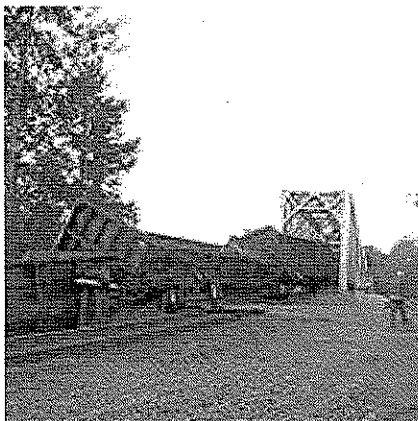
Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon rejected the plan, saying train safety is a federal matter.

However, CN has been issued a pollution prevention order by the province in relation to cleanup and monitoring after the Prince George oil spill.

CN is also being sued over a major 2005 derailment that spilled toxic chemicals into the Cheakamus River, decimating its salmon population.

It faces the potential of millions of dollars in fines under both federal transportation safety and provincial environmental legislation.

RECENT DERAILMENTS:



CREDIT: Global BC

Ten cars from a CN Rail freight train left the tracks in downtown Quesnel during a routine switching operation Tuesday evening.

Aug. 4: Three train cars full of gas and lumber and a locomotive catch fire in a Prince George railyard. The stubborn fire takes most of a day to put out but officials say no fuel leaked into the nearby Fraser River.

April 23: Engineer Lonnie Plasko, 51, dies when he stays aboard an out-of-control CP Rail locomotive that leaves the tracks on a steep grade into Trail, B.C. Two other employees jump to safety before the crash.

March 11: A CP Rail train has 19 cars carrying coal and other products knocked off the tracks by an avalanche. It takes days to rebuild the section of track.

March 4: A CN train derails and spills grain near Blue River, two hours north of Kamloops. Twenty-seven cars leave the tracks but there are no injuries or environmental damage.

Feb. 28: Hydrochloric acid spills from one of five cars of a CP Rail train that goes off the tracks in the Kicking Horse Canyon, east of Golden. The spill is contained, say officials.

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Search Railroad Sites For:

Canadian National Firdale, Manitoba 5-2-2002



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Following excerpt was taken from the UTU News online. Friday, May 3, 2002

CN train hauling chemicals derails in Manitoba

FIRDALE, Manitoba -- A freight train carrying dangerous chemicals collided with a semi-trailer in southwestern Manitoba on Thursday (May 2), sending a towering plume of thick, black smoke into the air and forcing the evacuation of dozens of area residents, the Globe and Mail reported.

CN Rail spokesman Jim Feeny said neither the truck driver nor the train's driver were killed in the 4:15 p.m. accident, but there was a large fire at an uncontrolled railway crossing along CN's main line.

"A locomotive and several cars have derailed," he said. "There were no injuries to our crew and preliminary information was that the truck driver was not injured, but we do have a fire on scene."

Feeny said 15 of the 20 cars that derailed were on fire, including cars carrying benzene and plastic pellets. At least one of the derailed cars was carrying hexane, although that car was not on fire, he said.

An area five to eight kilometers wide was being evacuated, although Manitoba RCMP spokesman Sergeant Steve Saunders indicated the region was sparsely populated.

Among the evacuees were 60 residents of the Pine Creek Hutterite colony who live two kilometers from the crash site.

Colony manager Lawrence Maendel was at the crash site shortly after the accident happened.

"My tongue was tingling, but we should be OK," said Maendel, who was frustrated at being evacuated because the colony is in the middle of spring seeding and still has 1,780 hectares left to go.

They also have 5,000 goslings that need to be attended every two to three hours.

"All we are concerned about right now is when we can get back in there," he said. "This is our livelihood."

Roy Storie and his wife Gwen also live near the accident site. They took the dog when the evacuation order came down but had to leave their cat behind.

"This is a dangerous toxin -- it could get you any time," Roy said. "One of the guys came tearing down the road. He said a ball of flame was going over his house."

Gerry Smith, who works at the Petro-Canada station in nearby Austin, said several emergency officials instructed him to spread word of the fire and stand by for possible evacuation.

"They've got everybody on standby in case we have to bug out. There's been a number of outfits been through here," Smith said.

"They say if it [smoke] comes down, it will fry the lungs right out of you. There's a bit of concern. I'm not too keen about the whole thing, but what are you going to do?"

Hexane is a liquid hydrocarbon that can be harmful if inhaled. Its vapor can cause flash fires and overexposure may cause nausea and dizziness.

Benzene is a colorless liquid that is volatile and carcinogenic. It is found in coal, tar and petroleum and is used as a solvent in the manufacturing of plastics.

Sgt. Saunders said several kilometers of the Trans-Canada Highway had been closed and traffic rerouted onto the Yellowhead Highway.

Darius Wurtz, who lives eight kilometers from the site, took his plane up to get a better look.

"I knew it was serious," he said. "You don't see smoke like that. It's a sight to behold, burning like crazy."

Firdale, about 150 kilometers west of Winnipeg, was also the scene of a derailment in December 1992 when 25 cars of a 90-car CN freight train jumped the track. Thirteen of the derailed cars were carrying pulp, seven held lumber and five were empty.

The Transportation Safety Board found a straight-plate wheel on one car had cracked through the hub after becoming overheated because of sticking brakes.

The 70-car train that derailed Thursday was a regularly scheduled east-bound freight.

May 3, 2002

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CN facing charges after 2005 spill

THE CANADIAN PRESS
MARCH 18, 2008 AT 6:37 PM EDT

EDMONTON — Canadian National Railway is facing federal charges alleging a train derailment destroyed bird and fish habitat when it dumped almost 800,000 litres of oil and other chemicals on the shore of a popular Alberta lake.

The charges by the Environment and Oceans and Fisheries departments stem from a spill on Aug. 3, 2005, that fouled Lake Wabamun west of Edmonton and forced 20 people from their homes and cottages.

"I'm glad these guys are (laying charges)," said Doug Goss, who at one time led area residents fighting for compensation and cleanup after the spill.

"Why it took them so long to do it, I have no idea."

The Wabamun spill from 43 cars of heavy bunker C oil and pole-treating oil killed hundreds of birds and fish, polluted beaches and shoreline and forced authorities to truck clean drinking water into the area for 18 months.

By May 2006 the lake was declared safe for swimming and boating, but not for washing dishes, watering vegetables and showering. But as late as last summer, people reported seeing oil on the surface of the lake and the local health authority warned the public to watch for visible oil, tarballs and oily aquatic vegetation on the beach or in shallow water by the shoreline.

A January 2007 report by environmental consultants hired by CN suggested the lake wouldn't suffer permanent damage because of the spill. Tests showed no spill-related contaminants present in the lake's fish. Nor was there evidence that any remaining oil contamination was any threat to human health, the report said.

CN offered about \$7.5-million in compensation to the area's 1,600 residents. The payments ranged in size from \$1,500 to \$27,000 for those closest to the spill.

"We've known about (the charges) for some time," said CN spokesman Jim Feeny, who added the charges were laid Feb. 1.

Mr. Feeny said CN has lived up to its promises with regard to the cleanup and ongoing testing and monitoring of the lake.

"We still have monitoring sites on the shoreline at the derailment site," he said. "There are a number of studies that either we or government agencies are doing on the lake itself."

Mr. Goss said most of the residents have moved on.

"The lake has cleaned up," he said. "Everybody's pretty much settled with CN. The majority of people at Lake Wabamun have put a lot of this behind them. It was a really nasty time."

CN was also charged by the Alberta government for failing to properly respond to the derailment and spill. A trial date is to be set in June.

One multimillion-dollar lawsuit remains before the courts. The Paul First Nation said the CN environmental report didn't take into consideration the spill's impact on their traditional use of the land, which included hunting, fishing and gathering plants for medicines and religious purposes. Due to prevailing winds at the time, much of the oil on the lake was blown toward where the Paul band lives.

The Transportation Safety Board found that the accident was caused by an aging, defective replacement rail that broke under the train's weight. A panel reviewing Canada's railway safety was also critical of CN for its "culture of fear and discipline" in the railway's safety management plan.

News of the charges Tuesday came the same day CN announced plans to spend \$730-million on infrastructure improvements to its rail system in Canada. Most of that money — \$400-million — is to be spent in Western Canada.

The railway was to make its first court appearance on the federal charges in Edmonton on Wednesday.

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Phillip Crawford, Publisher

- >
- > With foam running low, calls were placed to fire departments around west-central Mississippi for help.
- >
- > Mary Johnston, who lives with her mother less than a half-mile from the crash site, said the collision shook their home. Johnston made her way to the site and saw the fire and smoke. "It scared me," she said.
- >
- > Katrina Warnock, who also lives off Old U.S 49, said she saw a plume of black smoke drifting along the skyline. Warnock joined her mother, aunt and cousins at the community center shelter.
- >
- > A hazardous material team from the rail company and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality were on the scene, but left by mid- to late morning, said Nash Nunnery, a spokesman for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.
- >
- > The trains collided on a bridge crossing at Anding Oil City Road, Williams said.
- >
- > Karen Phillips, a spokeswoman for CNR, said 17 cars derailed; two carrying grain, three empty grain cars and 12 residue
- > cars.
- >
- > The residue cars included five carrying liquefied petroleum gas, one full of isopropylamine gas (a cleaning solvent), one full of carbamate pesticide, three cars full of soybeans and two carrying clay, she said. None of the derailed cars leaked, Phillips said.
- >
- > The northbound train from New Orleans, on its way to Iowa, had 137 cars and four locomotives, she said. The southbound train from Champaign, Ill., to Ferguson, had 107 cars and two locomotives, Phillips said.
- >
- > The crossing had a signal, Phillips said, adding that the investigation into the crash is ongoing.
- >
- > Such accidents are considered rare. Between 2001 and 2004, there were 46 head-on collisions, according to the *[Federal Railroad Administration]* in Washington, D.C.
- >
- > *****
- > Two freight trains collide in Mississippi, 1 dead, 3 missing
- > 10 July 2005
- > Associated Press Newswires
- >
- > BENTONIA, Miss. (AP) - Two freight trains collided and partially derailed Sunday and Yazoo County authorities said they had recovered the body of one crew member and were searching the wreckage for three others.
- > "We have recovered one body and the others are missing," said Ricky Shivers, Yazoo County coroner.
- > He said a fire that followed the crash had hampered search team efforts.
- >
- > The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency had said earlier that emergency officials reported all four crew members had been confirmed dead.
- > Shivers said no other injuries were reported.
- > The collision northeast of Bentonina in west-central Mississippi involved a total 17 cars on two Canadian National Railroad freight trains. CN

that a signal malfunctioned can be difficult. In the more than 400 accidents in the Times analysis, 10 percent of the signal problems were listed as confirmed. The rest were listed as "alleged," meaning that a technician checked the signal later and found no problem, said Ms. Wilhide, the spokeswoman for the Association of American Railroads.

But determining what happened at the time of an accident is possible only at those signals equipped with devices to record when a warning is activated and the position of the gates when the crash occurred. Most signals lack such devices. More often, the determination comes down to what witnesses say, and their accounts may differ.

Even when no accident occurs, the Federal Railroad Administration requires railroads to report to a separate database when signals fail to give drivers a sufficient warning. The required 20 seconds are necessary because gates do not descend instantly. They typically begin to lower four to five seconds after signal activation and take about five seconds to be fully deployed. The reports in this federal database, however, often provide few or no details on the signal malfunctions.

This database does not reflect every signal that fails to operate properly. The most common problems, false activations, are not included. Also, according to the rail industry, if a malfunctioning signal is taken out of service so it can be worked on, it does not have to be reported separately to the signal problem database - even if an accident occurs - because the signal did not technically fail; it was simply out of service.

In the summer of 2002, 27 short signals on the Canadian National tracks in Illinois were reported to the federal database. Some signals were short by only a second or two, but most reports did not specify the length of time. Records show that after the malfunctions were discovered, Canadian National temporarily lowered the allowable train speed for all railroads using the affected tracks. The railroad administration said the problems "were primarily related to deposits from freight spillage that caused a buildup of material on the rail surface." Since then, it said, steps have been taken to improve the sealing of railroad cars that carry grain.

An Amtrak spokesman said he was unaware of the Illinois short signals until The Times asked about them. The passenger service, he added, does not keep records of signal malfunctions that involve its trains. Amtrak's president, David L. Gunn, said in an interview that he believed that freight railroads tried their best to maintain warning signals.

Even so, Mr. Gunn said he found the apparent breakdown in Illinois troublesome.

"Absolutely," he said. "Any failure like that will put somebody in danger."

In the Michigan crash last April, that danger proved fatal to Melanie Pouch and her daughter, Meghann, according to witness accounts. Ten people said the train had entered the crossing when the warning gates began to descend. About a month later, the police officially concluded that the signal malfunctioned.

— Nonetheless, Canadian National's accident report still states that the signal is only alleged - but not proved - to have malfunctioned.

X "It's clearly inappropriate of the railroad to call this an alleged malfunction," said Bryan J. Waldman, a lawyer representing Mrs. Pouch's estate. "Corporations speak about how injured people need to take responsibility for their own actions, and corporations need to take responsibility for their actions."



Two People Killed After Trains Crash, Burn Northwest of Detroit; Chemicals Leak

Thursday , November 15, 2001

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. —

Two people were killed and two others trapped in a fiery crash between two freight trains that resulted in a chemical leak and forced the evacuation of nearby homes, authorities said.

The crash occurred at 6:15 a.m. in this community about 25 miles northwest of Detroit, said Sheriff's Sgt. Roy Coates. Authorities did not know what caused on Detroit television station WDIV showed one of those trapped being taken out of the train and transported in the back of a pickup truck along the railroad tracks. He appeared to be injured.

People living within a mile of the crash site were evacuated because of the risk from chemicals on the trains. A hazardous materials team was trying to determine what chemicals were involved, Coates said.

The accident occurred on a track operated by Grand Trunk, a subsidiary of Canadian National railroad.

Railroad spokesman Jack Burke said the two people who died were railroad employees whose names were being withheld pending notification of family.

He said chloride gas was on board, but he believed it had not leaked. If the gas leaked, authorities would be forced to extend the evacuation to a 1.7-mile radius, Coates said.

Mary O'Daniel, whose house is near the tracks, said she heard one train pass, then another.

"As the (second) train was going through, there was a rumbling and then all of a sudden, boom, boom, boom, boom," she said.

Some nearby schools were closed Thursday while authorities checked what was on the trains, Coates said.

National Transportation Safety Board investigators were headed to the site, said spokesman Terry Williams.

Erin Bellinger, 19, who lives near tracks, said she was concerned because she didn't have much information and police told her she may have to evacuate.

"Where do we go? What do we do? How far do we have to go before we can breathe the air? ... It's kind of crazy," she said.

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