

## Old tank cars on way out

CN wants to 'aggressively' drop models deemed unsafe

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The railway industry wants to "aggressively phase out" older model tank cars that have been implicated in several recent accidents, the head of CN Rail's safety division told an industry forum Monday.

But the consensus at the daylong workshop was that there's no quick fix for a decades-old problem that has almost 80,000 sub-standard DOT-111 tank cars carrying flammable liquids on North American tracks.

And whatever the solution, the cost eventually will be borne by consumers.

Sam Berrada, director general of safety and occupational health services for CN, told an overflow crowd of industry types, regulators, lobbyists and local first responders that railways "will continue to push aggressively" for safer, stronger tank cars.

A derailment and fire involving a CN train in northwestern New Brunswick last week has renewed calls for greater safety in the booming oil-by-rail trade, which became an international cause following last summer's deadly derailment and fire in Lac-Mégantic, Que.

Federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt responded on the weekend by promising the government will formalize the standard for new tank car construction adopted by the rail industry in October 2011. "Our government's new tougher standards to the DOT-111 tank cars are part of our commitment to making the rail sector safer," spokesman Remi Moreau said in an email Monday.

But the government's announced standards are not new and not tougher ; they simply match those already voluntarily adopted by industry more than two years ago.

The forum heard from CN's Berrada and others that even better cars than the post-2011 model might be in order. Moves to date, however, don't even begin to address the vast majority of older rolling stock.

Governments in Canada and the United States have been reluctant to deal with the huge number of older DOT-111s, in part because of the cost and logistics of an overhaul.