



## Concerned About The Safety of Crude Traveling by Rail, New York's Governor Isn't Waiting For The Feds to Act

Governor orders an immediate "inspection blitz"!

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by John Pendleton | Saturday, March 01, 2014 Righands

On Wednesday, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said some of the railroad tank cars being used to ship crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken field may be an "unacceptable public risk." The cars, known as DOT 111s, were all built before 2011 and the NTSB has said vulnerabilities with the cars mean they can easily rupture in an accident, releasing crude oil that then ignites.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y, demanded that the freight rail industry and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to update an agreement reached last week to address oil train safety concerns. He said it should be amended to require industry to develop a plan by July 1 to phase out or retrofit the DOT-111s.

New York's Governor, Andrew Cuomo, said on Friday that he has ordered an "inspection blitz" this week of oil trains, a rail yard and a terminal at the Port of Albany by state and federal regulators. The push was a combined effort by inspectors from the state departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation, as well as the Federal Railroad Administration.

In Albany, the state capitol, DEC staffers started a "thorough, multi-week" inspection of the oil terminal at the Port of Albany operated by Global Partners. That survey will examine the company's safety plans and the procedures that are intended to keep oil spills from reaching the nearby Hudson River.

One environmental lobbying group has revealed that the DOT currently has just five rail inspectors statewide.

State inspectors, accompanied by officials from Transport Canada and CP Rail, visited the Kenwood Yard at the Port. The Kenwood facility is owned by Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway and serves as a staging area for inbound crude oil tank cars, some of which are pumped out into storage tanks. These tanks are then emptied into barges for shipment downriver to refineries on the coast. The inspectors looked at 120 tanker cars at the yard, and found three instances of defective steel wheels and three of defective brakes. All of the cars that were cited were DOT 111s.

The Port of Albany has become a significant shipping point for crude oil transiting to coastal refineries and two of the Port's terminals have state permission to handle 2.8 billion gallons of oil a year.

The Governor's office reported that about two miles of track at the Kenwood Yard were inspected, revealing 30 defects, including "loose rail joints, fasteners and a broken joint bar" that were "immediately repaired" by CP workers.

- See more at: <http://www.righands.com/news/news-detail/concerned-about-the-safety-of-crude-traveling-by-rail-new-york-s-governor-isn-t-waiting-for-the-feds-to-act-579#sthash.caZrYQDR.dpuf>