

FCM calls for more rail safety

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Recently, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (FCM) responded to the report made by the Transportation Safety Board concerning more safeguards in the transport of oil or gasoline products by railway. The recommendations from the board stem from the tragic accident resulting in a catastrophic fire this past July in Lac Mégantic that engulfed the Quebec village.

FCM President and Lachine borough Mayor Claude Dauphin commented on the safety board's "need for urgent action by the railway industry and the federal government to ensure the safe movement of dangerous goods by rail." Special attention has to be paid to upgrading tank cars to ensure they can accommodate the potential dangerous and flammable material, the FCM believes.

"We are pleased that the TSB and the American National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have reaffirmed the need to address the higher risk posed by tank cars that are not appropriate for shipping certain volatile liquids," Dauphin noted.

Recommendations on how to improve rail safety with better equipped tank cars are being made by the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Advisory Council with the report to be sent to the federal government by the end of the month for review.

Another recommendation from FCM concerning the railway transportation of flammable liquids is ensuring mandatory Emergency Response Assistance Plans "for large-volume shipments. We expect Emergency Response Assistance Plans to be in place for all dangerous goods products that pose a serious hazard to our communities," explained Dauphin.

The FCM would also require that the safety precautions extend for all types of flammable products, including adding ethanol to the list.

"We cannot afford to wait to make this important change, said Dauphin." "Canadians rightly expect to see real, workable solutions that will keep their communities safe."