

# Lac Megantic crash led to 'erosion of public trust': Transport safety board chair

[Jessica Hume](#) Calgary Sun April 1, 2014

OTTAWA — The Lac Megantic tragedy has led to an "erosion of public trust" in rail safety, Transport Safety Board chairwoman Wendy Tadros told the federal transport committee Tuesday.

In January, the board issued a report of suggested improvements to rail safety. The federal government has until April 23 to respond.

NDP MP Mike Sullivan says there is no need for the delay.

"They're waiting to respond because they can," he said.

Some of those recommendations include better route planning and better testing of safety mechanisms, as well as replacing outdated DOT 111 rail cars, DOT 111 cars are unable to withstand collisions or derailments, yet have been used increasingly to transport dangerous — often volatile — goods.

"We're living with what we knew 20 years ago was an unsafe railcar," Sullivan said. "It was used for 500 shipments a year until five years ago and now it's 140,000 in Canada alone."

He said it's unacceptable that the dangers of the rail cars have been known since 1991 yet no action has been taken.

"How many Lac Megantics will there be before we actually take the definitive action that's necessary to protect the people?"

The Lac Megantic crash is still under investigation. Among the questions that may come from that is whether there is a safe speed for the DOT 111 cars.

Tadros points out that in the crash, even the end cars — travelling only about 20km/hour — were destroyed, indicating there may not be.

Rail companies appear before the transport committee Thursday, and Sullivan hopes to hear whether they have conducted any independent risk analysis.