



Citizens Acting for Rail Safety - Statement Against New Oil Pipelines

Recent oil industry statements promoting new pipelines as the solution to the hazards of shipping oil by rail¹ are misleading and undermine efforts to improve public safety. Citizens Acting for Rail Safety opposes new oil pipelines because:

- **More pipelines will not stop the movement of oil by rail.** Rail and pipelines are not interchangeable and play different roles in our energy infrastructure networks. Shippers and refineries will continue to take advantage of the speed and flexibility that freight rail transport offers over pipelines.
- **Expanding oil transportation infrastructure dilutes limited safety resources.** Presently, there are not enough independent inspectors to ensure the safety of existing rails, tankers and pipelines. Rather than building new structures, current limited resources should focus on reducing risk to communities from the existing rail and pipeline infrastructure.² Pitting oil trains against pipelines is a false choice that may distract communities from pursuing efforts to improve rail safety through common-sense regulation, while absolving oil and rail industries and regulators of their responsibility for rail safety.
- **Expanding oil transportation infrastructure increases risk to more communities.** Pipelines and oil by rail are both dangerous to the communities they impact. Rail may be more likely to spill, but pipeline ruptures are typically larger and more expensive to clean up. Residents, local governments, water resources and the environment are all threatened -- starting at the well heads and all along the rail and pipeline routes, through our prairies, wetlands, watersheds, agricultural lands, native lands, cities, towns, and industrial areas, across our rivers and streams, all the way to the destination refineries and port facilities.
- **Building additional oil infrastructure that will soon be obsolete is short sighted.** The United States has a record-breaking glut of crude oil in storage because more is currently extracted than is being used worldwide. Demand for oil is unlikely to reach levels equal to supply as our society transitions to a cleaner economy run on safer and more affordable renewable energy. Many communities across the country are already successfully resisting efforts to expand oil processing and export facilities served by either pipelines or oil trains.^{3, 4, 5, 6}

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety therefore encourages communities to focus on improving safety and reducing environmental risk inherent in both pipelines and oil by rail, and on holding oil companies, railroads and regulators responsible for protecting the environment and public safety in an era of fundamental change in world energy markets.

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety is a non-partisan, grassroots advocacy group that works with residents, legislators, and agency officials to improve rail safety to benefit the health and security of people, wildlife and the environment. Formed in response to the exponential growth of crude oil and ethanol transportation by rail over recent years, Citizens Acting for Rail Safety strives to bring the citizen voice to bear on issues associated with high hazard freight trains going through our communities.

Footnotes

1 Dakota Access Pipeline: Police remove protesters; scores arrested by Marlena Baldacci, Emanuella Grinberg and Holly Yan - CNN (October 27, 2016) <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/27/us/dakota-access-pipeline-protests/index.html>

2 Report on the Improvements to Highway-Rail Grade Crossings and Rail Safety. MNDOT, December 2014.

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/govrel/reports/2014/CBRCrossingStudy-December2014/ReportonHwy-RailXingsandRailSafety-2014.pdf>

3 Vancouver City Council Bans Crude Oil Terminals by Washington Chapter of Sierra Club (July 2015)

<http://www.sierraclub.org/washington/vancouver-city-council-bans-crude-oil-terminals>

4 Maine port city's ban on crude exports prompts oil industry threats by Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times (July 22, 2014)

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-maine-oil-sands-crude-20140722-story.html>

5 Fighting dangerous oil trains in Baltimore, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

<http://chesapeakeclimate.org/maryland/fighting-crude-oil-by-rail-in-baltimore>

6 State denies permit for Baltimore crude oil terminal, by Jeff Barker, Baltimore Sun (June 3, 2015)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-bz-crude-oil-20150603-story.html>