

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August 14, 2016

Colorful Kayak & Riverwalk Parade Event Calls for a Stop to Dangerous Crude Oil Trains on Milwaukee's Tracks and Bridges

When: Sunday, August 14, 2016 - 4pm

What: Citizens Acting for Rail Safety–Milwaukee Area and the Milwaukee Riverkeeper will lead a group of citizens concerned about crude oil train traffic. After decades of clean water efforts, Milwaukeeans love spending time on our downtown rivers, riverwalk and lake -- walking, boating, fishing and dining. We will be paddling and parading to speak out against a dangerous, unnecessary and unacceptable pipeline on rails snaking through Milwaukee that threatens our water, our health and our safety.

Visuals & Sounds: A colorful and lively gathering of kayaks on the river and people on the riverwalk (next to the railroad swing bridge that carries oil trains) with imaginative banners, flags, large puppets. A Native American prayer will open the event. Then, Jahmes Finlayson and Dena Aronson will lead the group in drumming, singing and chanting.

Where: On the Milwaukee Riverwalk - at E. Chicago Ave (just west of Water St) in the Third Ward.

Why: The oil industry is moving millions of gallons of highly toxic, potentially explosive crude oil through Milwaukee in unsafe rail cars over tracks and bridges that were never designed for this dangerous cargo.

This bridge is just one of many in the metro area where trains carrying volatile crude oil cross or travel near local rivers.

Our railroad system was not laid out with the unprecedented weight, length and unwieldiness of these trains and their dangerous cargo in mind. Crude oil trains threaten the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers and Lake Michigan.

Fourteen times in the past three years oil trains have exploded in the US and Canada.

Three years ago, on July 6, 2013, an oil train (that earlier came through Milwaukee) derailed and exploded in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, killing 47 people, destroying the downtown and contaminating the nearby lake and river with thousands of gallons of oil.

The latest oil train disaster occurred on June 3 in Mosier, Oregon, where the derailment shut down the town's nearby wastewater treatment plant as thousands of gallons of oil contaminated the plant and the nearby Columbia River.

Key fact: Mosier firefighters were surprised to have railroad safety officials advise them that the burning tank cars were too hot for the use of foam.

"90,000 Milwaukeeans live in the oil train blast zone -- the ½ mile evacuation zone bordering the railroad tracks. The oil trains are an unacceptable risk--too dangerous for the rails." noted Eric Hansen, steering committee member of Citizens Acting for Rail Safety-Milwaukee Area.

"The Milwaukee River flows cleaner today than it has in many decades, and it is unthinkable that as we are finally recovering from decades of legacy pollution, that our rivers are now under threat from a crude oil spill that could erase many of our efforts to clean up these rivers and bring them back to health." said Cheryl Nenn, Milwaukee Riverkeeper.

#stopoiltrains

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety–Milwaukee Area is a grassroots non-partisan organization working for the health, safety, and quality of life of communities threatened by unsafe rail transportation.

SafeRails.org **SafeRails.MkeArea@gmail.com** **www.facebook.com/SafeRails.MkeArea**

Milwaukee Riverkeeper is a science based advocacy organization working for swimmable, fishable rivers.

Milwaukeeriverkeeper.org

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Additional Information about June 3, 2016 Mosier Accident:

Key fact: nobody puts out oil train fires. Standard procedure is to retreat a safe distance, attempt to contain the fire and stop it from spreading.

A recent oil train derailment and fire in Mosier, Oregon was the last straw for many fire officials.

Sheer luck, and a rare windless day in an area noted for its high winds, spared the town from a Lac Megantic — like disaster but angry local citizens and officials were horrified, realizing how close they had come to a catastrophe.

Incredibly, the railroad tracks were inspected just a few days before the incident - yet defective track bolts caused the derailment. In addition, the town's fire chief was surprised to be informed by railroad safety officials that covering the burning tank cars with foam would be ineffective — the metal was so hot that the foam would just evaporate.¹

After the Mosier fire, the governor of Washington, Oregon's department of transportation and the Association of Washington Firefighters called for an immediate moratorium on crude oil train traffic.

In addition, Jim Hall, former chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, called for an end to rail shipments of crude oil, saying "enough is enough."²

After the oil train fire, Jim Appleton, Mosier's fire chief, noted: "I hope that this becomes the death knell for this mode of shipping this cargo. I think it's insane."³

We agree.

Footnotes:

1 & 3 "Mosier Fire Chief Jim Appleton Calls Shipping Bakken Crude Oil By Rail 'Insane'" -

<http://www.opb.org/news/series/oil-trains/oil-sheen-slick-found-columbia-river-mosier-train-derailment>

2 "Phase Out Rail Shipments Of Crude Oil" by Jim Hall, a former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2016/06/phase_out_rail_shipments_of_cr.html

For more information:

DOT-111 Reader <http://dot111.info>

Excellent source of news and information about rail tank cars and related issues maintained by a member of the La Crosse chapter of Citizens Acting for Rail Safety.

Oil Trains Are Unsafe. Federal law is weak.

Thorough reporting by **DeSmog Blog** on the weak existing federal regulatory standards and the oil and rail industry's failure to meet them demonstrates there have been no improvements on the safety of the 100,000 unsafe tank cars in the US fleet. Only a few hundred of these 100,000 dangerous tank cars have been retrofitted, and cars updated to the newest tank car standard will still puncture at just a few miles an hour faster than the current tank cars. After 2025, there may be marginal improvements in the tank cars and procedures associated with oil trains. But trains will still derail, and crude will still leak and ignite.

<http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/05/09/report-card-only-225-out-over-100-000-unsafe-tank-cars-retrofit-first-year>

<http://www.desmogblog.com/2015/05/01/new-oil-rail-regulations-are-big-win-oil-and-rail-industries-won-t-stop-bomb-trains>

<http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/05/09/report-card-only-225-out-over-100-000-unsafe-tank-cars-retrofit-first-year>

W A T E R I N T H E B L A S T Z O N E

Examples of Horrendous Hits and Near Misses since Lac-Megantic

prepared by Citizens Acting for Rail Safety - Twin Cities

November 8, 2013 - Aliceville, Alabama - (rural/wetlands/Tombigbee River)

Train carrying 2.9 million gallons of Bakken crude oil derailed and exploded. 749,000 gallons of oil spilled from 26 tanker cars into fragile wetlands. Traces of oil were detected downstream in a tributary that flows into a creek and the Tombigbee River.

January 20, 2014 - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - (urban/Schuylkill River) (near miss)

100-car CSX train from Chicago derailed on bridge over Schuylkill River. 7 cars dangled above river and a freeway. No spill detected.

April 30, 2014 - Lynchburg, Virginia - (urban/James River) (CPC-1232 tankers)

15 cars of a CSX Bakken crude oil train derailed in Lynchburg, near a trackside eatery and pedestrian waterfront. A fire erupted. 3 cars plunged into the James River, and 30,000 gallons of oil spilled into the Lynchburg River.

February 4, 2015 - Dubuque, Iowa - (rural/Mississippi River) (ethanol)

CP Rail train derailed 10 mi. north of Dubuque. 11 ethanol tankers left track; 3 caught fire. 55,000 gallons of ethanol spilled into the Mississippi River.

February 16, 2015 - Mount Carbon, WV - (Appalachian Mountains/Kanawha River) (CPC-1232 tankers)

Derailment of CSX train carrying Bakken crude oil to Yorktown, Virginia shipping depot. 26 cars left the tracks, causing a fire, and 18 cars leaked oil; one car fell almost into the Kanawha River. A sheen of oil that reached the river burned, as did the river bank. Oil was found trapped on the ice covering Armstrong Creek, the tributary to the Kanawha River at the derailment site. 2 downstream water treatment plants were closed.

March 7, 2015 - Gogoma, Northern Ontario - (rural boreal forest/Mattagami River) (CPC-1232 tankers)

Alberta tar sands crude oil train derailed; 10 cars jumped the tracks. Some cars caught fire. 5 cars fell and spilled into the Mattagami River, whose waters finally flow into Lake Huron.

March 4, 2015 - Galena, Illinois - (rural/near Mississippi River) (CPC-1232 tankers) (near miss)

BNSF Bakken crude oil train derailed 3 mi. south of Galena, near the confluence of the Galena and Mississippi Rivers. 2 tankers split open and burst into flame. The 21 derailed cars contained 630,000 gallons of Bakken crude.

May 6, 2015 - Heimdahl, North Dakota (Great Plains/wetlands/James River tributary)

107-car BNSF Bakken oil train derailed 1.5 mi. outside town. Although oil had been pretreated to reduce volatility, 10 cars burst into flames. 34,000 gallons burned, and another 60,000 gallons spilled, some of which was removed from sloughs (wetlands) near track.

November 7, 2015 - Alma, Wisconsin - (town/Mississippi River) (ethanol)

BNSF derailment in the Mississippi River town of North Alma (90 mi. southeast of Minneapolis). 32 tankers left the track as the train traveled southbound along the river. More than 20,000 gallons of ethanol spilled from 5 tankers onto the banks of the Mississippi and into the water. This was the 9th North American derailment in 2015 involving oil or ethanol.

MOST RECENT CRUDE-BY-RAIL DISASTER: IN THE SCENIC COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

June 3, 2016 - Mosier, Oregon - (Rocky Mountains town/Columbia River) (CPC-1232 tankers)

Since 2015 Union Pacific has sent one mile-long train of Bakken oil each week on a route along the Columbia through the town Mosier (70 mi. east of Portland) to a refinery in Tacoma, WA, from where it will be exported.

- On June 3, 2016, a 16-car derailment of a 96-car Union Pacific oil train spilled 42,000 gallons of Bakken crude into Mosier and the Columbia River and sparked a massive fire. Cleanup crews initially removed 10,000 gallons of crude oil from the town's sewage system, just 20' from the site of the derailment; later, more oil was found to have escaped into the river from the sewage system due to a pipe damaged in the derailment.
- The town's water aquifers were completely exhausted as fire crews attempted to cool the burning oil cars before foam could be used. A dry summer is predicted; rain is not expected to start substantially replenishing the aquifers before fall or winter. The derailment and fire necessitated mandatory evacuation of the town and shutdown of its sewage and water treatment systems. Returning residents were instructed to boil water for drinking and cooking, and not to use bathrooms or let water or anything else go into drains.
- As soon as it had repaired the faulty track - and even before removing the derailed oil tankers that lay just a few feet from the track -- Union Pacific resumed sending oil