



Safe Rail Communities was created in March 2014, after the July 2013 Lac-Mégantic tragedy. We are a registered not-for-profit, grassroots initiative with a national scope. We are ordinary citizens, deeply concerned about the transport by rail of dangerous goods, especially crude oil. Our street runs parallel to the transcontinental CPR rail line, which cuts across the centre of Toronto. Our homes are located within metres of this rail line.

For us, Lac-Mégantic was a wakeup call. Before Lac-Mégantic, we went about our everyday lives without much thought about what was travelling through our community. Surprising to this day is that there has been no judicial inquiry into the disaster, arguably one of the most catastrophic disasters in Canadian history. Our neighbours have been very uneasy watching long unit trains carrying crude oil pass our homes and parkette, where the neighbourhood children play. Our community is not unique. There are thousands like ours throughout Canada.

We began to research rail safety so that we could have a clear understanding of the issue. We were alarmed by what we learned.

First, the Transportation Safety Board has been warning for over two decades that the DOT-111 tank cars used to carry dangerous goods such as crude oil and ethanol, are defective and unsafe. While new tank car specifications were approved and announced in 2015, we are expected to wait until 2025 for full implementation.

Secondly, there was a huge increase in the shipment of volatile crude oil by rail. In 2009 there were only 500 of these tank cars travelling across Canada, by 2014 this number was approximately 140,000.

Third, first responders are not provided with vital information in regards to the transportation of dangerous goods by rail. While Protective Direction 36 now mandates railways to share information with municipalities, this data is historical

aggregate data from the previous two quarters of the calendar year. It is not real-time data.

Fourth, industry does not carry enough insurance to cover the true cost of a catastrophic derailment in a densely populated area.

And finally, we discovered through our Environmental Petition to the Office of the Auditor General (submitted in January 2015, and responded to in June 2015) that the government of Canada has not conducted any studies or reviews of the possible risks to public health and the environment with respect to the significant increase in crude oil shipments.

It is our opinion that industry is operating under a broken business model that places much of the risk onto the public. We are expected to take on the risk to both public safety and the public purse, while industry profits.

After three years of intensive research and consultation with experts, we have identified the following reasonable recommendations:

- First, set a safety-based standard (based on maximum vapour pressure) for the volatility of crude oil.
- Secondly, ensure that all dangerous goods are properly classified.
- Third, prescribe unlimited absolute liability for rail carriers and shippers of dangerous goods; carriers and shippers must have sufficient insurance to cover the full cost of a derailment in a densely populated area. This cost is estimated to be up to \$6 billion US, according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration's Draft Regulatory Impact Analysis
- Our fourth recommendation is to strengthen government oversight of the rail Safety Management System and increase the number of on-site rail inspectors.
- Fifth, strengthen government monitoring and enforcement of train speed limits
- Sixth, increase transparency and accountability by:
 - providing real-time data about dangerous goods shipments to First Responders and historical data to the public

AND

- providing the public with railway route analyses and risk assessments regarding the shipment of dangerous goods by rail
- Seventh, phase out unsafe tank cars immediately. The latest tank car standard allows railways to continue carrying crude oil in unsafe DOT 111 and CPC 1232 tank cars for up to 2025.
- Our eighth recommendation is to implement mandatory rail safety technology (Positive Train Control, Automated Track Inspection, Dragging Equipment Detectors and Automated Rail Car Monitoring).
- And finally, implement independent risk analysis of all of the factors that may contribute to a catastrophic derailment involving dangerous good.

We strongly believe that these measures will go a long way towards assuring the public that dangerous goods are shipped as safely as possible, and that Canadians will not be left paying the cost of any future derailments.

We also believe that it's our government's responsibility to set the standards for industry to follow in order to ensure public safety. Unfortunately, after almost three years since the tragedy of Lac-Mégantic, there remains much to be done to reassure families living, working, and playing within our communities of their safety.

Tinkering with the system will not be enough.

We need substantive amendments to bring about meaningful change.

Thank you,

Helen Vassilakos & Patricia Lai, co-founders

Safe Rail Communities

www.saferail.ca

infosaferrail@gmail.com