

TALKING POINTS FOR
CYNTHIA QUARTERMAN
PHMSA ADMINISTRATOR
PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
TO THE
RAILROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
LOCATION
AUGUST 29, 2013

- Good morning. Let me begin by echoing Administrator Szabo's gratitude to everyone here today for coming together on such short notice for this emergency meeting.
- I would also like to add my special thanks to Transport Canada's Director General for Rail Safety, Mr. Luc Burdon (Luke Bur-DON), for joining us today.
- On the one hand, while I am delighted to make my maiden voyage speaking before such an august group of rail aficionados, I am saddened that we are gathered here today on such a solemn occasion.
- Director General Burdon, I send my deepest regrets to those in Lac Megantic, Quebec and all of Canada for the great losses you have suffered because of the recent tragic rail incident.
- Our collective responsibility today is to ensure that an event like that is never repeated.
- We have a solemn duty to not only learn from what happened in Lac-Megantic and apply the lessons learned to our safety regulations and practices, we also need to

thoroughly evaluate and identify the risks associated with bulk movements of high hazards, such as crude oil, and use our expertise to anticipate the next tragedy before it occurs to do our best to make sure that it doesn't.

- We at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration work with our sister agencies, such as FRA, to protect people and the environment from hazardous materials risks in every mode of transportation, including, motor vehicle, airplane, ship, pipeline and railroad.
- Most of what we do is intended to prevent incidents by setting and enforcing nationwide safety regulations, conducting inspections, training and educating hazardous materials shippers and carriers, but we also prepare the public and first responders to reduce consequences in the unlikely event an incident does occur.
- With nearly a million shipments of hazardous materials every day, most reach their destination safely. The number of incidents are a minute percentage of the movements occurring and over the last 25 years incidents involving death or major injury have been steadily declining.
- However, bulk shipments of high hazards continue to pose a risk for a high consequence, catastrophic event such as the regrettable incident in Quebec. That is why we must be ever vigilant in continuously improving our safety system by identifying and closing any safety gaps.

- People often ask me what keeps me up at nights, an incident like the one that occurred in Quebec is one of my nightmares.
- **We at DOT are determined to use all means necessary to ensure a tragedy like the one in Lac Megantic does not occur here.**
- **We are looking to you to help us keep that commitment.**
- **Together, we need to focus on identifying the appropriate types and quantities of hazardous materials that warrant special handling. That includes addressing issues such as attendance, securement, crew size and safety and security planning, but we don't want to unnecessarily circumscribe what you do here today. We want your collective expertise to think beyond the Quebec incident to ensure we have considered all foreseeable risks.**
- As all of you know, ensuring and improving hazmat safety on our Nation's railroads requires dedication and hard work by many. My agency will soon seek public comment on how to enhance the safe transportation of hazmat by rail, including changes to the design of the DOT 111 tank car.
- Changes to the tank car standards, however, are doubtless not enough because no tank car can be built and used that could withstand some of the tragic incidents that occur. We must also consider operational issues associated with the rail movement of high hazards such as the ones being discussed today as well as rail car placement and buffer car

standards. We need to answer tough questions about the existing fleet of thousands of tank cars in crude oil service as well as the adequacy of the newly proposed changes to those standards.

- Rest assured that updating these safety standards will be a collaborative process. However, we know we can't wait. The volume of crude oil moving by rail has quadrupled in less than a decade. As greater quantities of hazmat are transported by rail, the risks increase and we have to make sure our regulations and practices keep pace with the market and new technology. We have to identify gaps and close them.
- I recently traveled to the Bakken Shale region, where oil production has doubled in just the past 3 years. There are hundreds of trucks and lots of new rail facilities moving product. I observed DOT's safety regulations at work. Now is the time to ensure our hazardous materials transportation safety requirements are prepared for the future.
- We need your expertise to help us make these important decisions.
- There are more hazardous materials moving on our railways than ever before. Let's make sure we keep our proud tradition of having the safest and most efficient railways in the world. Thank you.

###