



U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL

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Cantwell Announces Plan to Introduce Bill on Safety Standards for Crude-by-Rail

Senator: USDOT rules don't go far enough to protect cities and towns

[VIDEO AVAILABLE**](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a Senate Commerce Committee hearing today, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) announced plans to introduce legislation that would establish new, stronger safety standards for trains hauling flammable crude oil.

Cantwell told U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx that she didn't think the Administration's proposed rule under consideration would be strong enough and that legislation would be necessary to protect communities.

"I want to be clear and on the record: I will be introducing legislation to support a thicker hull and quicker phase-out than what is currently proposed," Cantwell said. **"We are not moving fast enough. I look forward to seeing your rule but we are going to come out with tougher standards."**

Cantwell asked Foxx during the hearing to explain the timeline under USDOT's rule for phasing out less safe rail cars. The USDOT is set to finalize [new standards](#) in May for oil tank cars hauling flammable materials such as crude oil and ethanol in the wake of several fiery derailments involving oil tank cars – including one in Quebec that killed 47 people.

"We are in the process of working with the (Office of Management and Budget) and the Administration on moving that rule," Foxx said. **"I would be getting ahead of myself and OMB by putting a tight deadline on it. There is a high level of urgency on it."**

Cantwell's questions came two weeks after a train hauling crude oil derailed in West Virginia and burst into flames. She said the issue is of the "utmost importance to the people of the Northwest." An average of 19 oil trains now traverse Washington state every week.

USDOT's proposed rules would phase out, over the course of several years, the use of older "DOT-111" tank cars for the shipment of Bakken crude. The DOT-111 poses a higher safety risk than newer cars, whose hulls are less likely to puncture in the case of a derailment. About 80,000 of these older, less safe DOT-111's are currently used to transport flammable liquids.

But the cars in the West Virginia incident were unjacketed CPC-1232s, a newer industry model that the National Transportation Safety Board has called marginally better than the legacy DOT-111 cars.

DOT's draft rule requires a phase-out of most DOT-111s in crude oil service by October 2017. It also provided a retrofit standard for tank cars to remain in service.

In a May 2014 [hearing](#), Cantwell pressed Foxx on the progress of implementing new regulations. In the same hearing, Foxx announced a new USDOT order requiring railroads to identify routes where trains are hauling more than 1 million gallons of Bakken crude and to notify state emergency management officials.

Washington state is the fifth-largest refining state in the U.S. and a destination for increasing quantities of crude-by-rail from North Dakota shale fields. The amount of crude oil shipped by rail through Washington state has increased from none in 2011 to 714 million gallons in 2013, according to a state Ecology Department [report](#). Recent high-profile rail accidents in North America have prompted Washington state lawmakers and officials in several cities to call for stronger regulations.

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