As oil tanker trains rumble through cities, concerns grow

Bakken oil trains rumble through downtown Milwaukee, leaving some residents afraid of what will happen if there is a spill.

By Crocker Stephenson and Lee Bergquist of the Journal Sentinel

C.A.R.S. & others testify at City Council hearing
Is this a new problem?

Are there more oil cars than a decade ago?
Crude by Rail, 2010

U.S. Energy Information Administration

Monday, April 10, 2017
Crude by Rail, 2012

U.S. Energy Information Administration

Monday, April 10, 2017
Crude by Rail, 2014

U.S. Energy Information Administration

Monday, April 10, 2017
ORIGINATED CARLOADS OF CRUDE OIL
VS. TERMINATED CARLOADS OF CRUDE OIL
ON U.S. CLASS I RAILROADS

*Estimate based on preliminary data
Source: AAR, FRA
What is the Blast Zone?
OIL TRAIN BLAST ZONE - Milwaukee
Citizens Acting For Rail Safety (C.A.R.S.)

BETH - Artist
Vanguard Sculpture Sis
MAKE THINGS in the BLAST ZONE.
C.A.R.S. saferails.org MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
These trains derail.
Watertown, WI - Cars of Bakken Crude on a siding after the derailment, November, 2015
Main rail lines travel alongside rivers.
Rock River, IL Derailment - Ethanol Spill and Fish Kill, 2009
Impossible to clean up
There ought to be a law against it.

I hope the rails can hold our weight!

Too much pressure!

I know it’s crude—but I have so much gas, I could explode!
What are DOT-111 cars? Why do these cars carrying crude oil explode when they derail?

Undegassified Crude oil
Cars built to carry vegetable oil
Under Pressure
No reinforced metal on car bodies or valves
72 degrees F ignition temperature with no heat shielding
72°F
... is the flash point of Bakken crude oil

#StopBombTrains

SAFERAILS.ORG
In 2007, Railroad Management pushed to cut train crews to one worker per train. This fueled formation of an organization of Railroad Workers from all 13 unions.

I learned about dangers posed by unsafe working conditions from Railroad Workers United. The irregular work schedules and abusive on call system cause sleep deprivation and extreme fatigue, leading to increased accidents.
Who's in control here?
Who is responsible for the tracks and RR bridges and the train cars?
A Fable

You don't need a fence!
I practice corporate self-regulation.
Bridge Footing of “Old Rusty”
Repairs to ‘Old Rusty’
July Press Conference in MKE - Lac Megantic Anniversary
Birthday Party for 1st & Oregon R.R. Bridge
Health Risks of Oil by Rail

- Explosions
- Fires which cannot be put out
- Spills into rivers and lakes contamination of drinking water and fish
- Spills contaminating soil
- Air pollution from diesel and from toxic cargo
- Emergency vehicles blocked at crossings waiting for 100+ cars to pass
- Increased accidents due to unsafe working conditions for Railroad Workers
- and more
We march with C.A.R.S. - in Twin Cities - 6/15
Supply Chain Organizing

- Oil extraction, whether Bakken Crude or Fracked Alberta Tar Sands
- Transit by Pipeline or Rail
- Transfer terminals
- Refineries
- Toxic byproducts - e.g. Petcoke
Jurisdiction

• Federal government, FRA over the train cars tracks and bridges

• Local governments have jurisdiction over ports and transfer facilities

• The recent Federal Transportation Bill includes provisions for more public access to inspection reports, but a special ‘public version’.

• The DOT-111 car safety feature requirements are delayed. Heat shielding, reinforced valve housing and body