

Municipalities need information on dangerous goods after second train derailment in Calgary (13/09/2013)

OTTAWA - Canada's municipalities are calling for urgent federal action on rail safety after a train derailment earlier this week in Calgary raised further concerns about their lack of access to critical information on what dangerous goods are being transported through their communities. This is the second derailment in Calgary this summer.

"City staff are risking their lives to deal with these emergencies and we are still unable to get specific information quickly about what is on these trains in order to ensure the safety of our residents. This simply cannot continue," said Naheed Nenshi, Mayor of the city of Calgary.

Canadians rely on their local services during rail emergencies, and they expect those services to be properly equipped to respond. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is calling on the federal government to take swift and concrete action on rail safety, including establishing a process to provide municipalities with adequate information on the dangerous goods that are being transported through their communities.

"Local governments and our front-line emergency responders need to know what dangerous goods are being transported through their communities so they can plan and respond effectively to emergencies," said Claude Dauphin, FCM President. "The federal government must take immediate action and work in close partnership with municipalities if it's going to effectively address rail safety."

FCM's national working group on rail safety has identified three priority areas which need to be addressed by the federal government and railway industry, in order to ensure the safety of Canada's railway network and the communities in which they operate:

- Equipping and supporting municipal first responders so they can deal appropriately with rail emergencies;
- Ensuring federal and industry policies and regulations address the rail safety concerns of municipalities;
- Preventing the downloading of rail safety and emergency response costs to local taxpayers.

FCM will be meeting with the Minister of Transport Lisa Raitt to discuss the working group's recommendations in the near future.

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