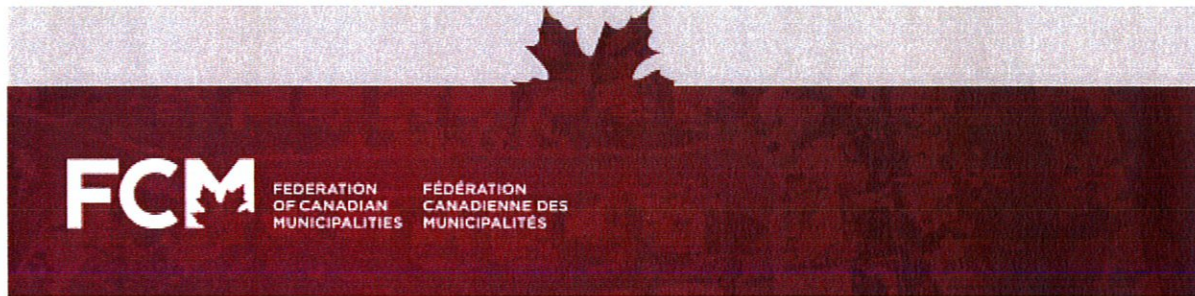


July 3, 2014

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Reflecting on the Lac-Mégantic tragedy

July 6, 2014, marks one year since the devastating derailment and explosion that claimed lives and caused catastrophic damage to the community of Lac-Mégantic, Québec. As Lac-Mégantic slowly rebuilds, it is with great sadness that we remember those who tragically lost their lives and recommit to our collective resolve to prevent such tragic events from happening again.

The Lac-Mégantic tragedy brought into focus the need to urgently review the rules and regulations governing rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods in Canada, and the potential risks to all of our communities. Only ten days prior to the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, national attention was focused on the severe flooding in Alberta when a Canadian Pacific freight train carrying dangerous goods derailed on a partially collapsed bridge over the Bow River in Calgary.

FCM immediately established a National Municipal Rail Safety Working Group to identify safety gaps, propose solutions, and press the federal government and railways on areas where swift and concrete action was needed. Our work has been focused on the need to adequately equip and support municipal first responders, reduce safety risks to our communities, and to ensure our communities aren't left to shoulder emergency costs.

Since the Working Group was formed last July, we have made significant progress on these recommendations by working directly with Transport Minister Lisa Raitt, the Transportation Safety Board, and the railways. Among the key changes we have been able to influence is the requirement for all shipments of flammable liquids like crude oil and ethanol to have Emergency Response Assistance Plans. These plans, previously not required for crude oil shipments, mean that shippers are now legally responsible for assisting local first responders during emergencies by providing specialized resources like fire fighting foam and product-specific technical expertise.

We have also helped secure other tangible and significant improvements to Canada's rail safety regime. Transport Canada has established an Emergency Response Task Force that will strengthen emergency response capacity across the country, put in place new rules to require detailed risk assessments along key dangerous goods routes, and established an aggressive 3-year timeline for phasing out DOT-111 tank cars that do not meet updated safety standards.

The federal government has also committed to increase the insurance requirements for all federally regulated railways. These are important changes, with real on the ground impacts that will help make our communities safer. I am proud of the role FCM has played in this progress, and it would not have been possible without the united voice of our members.

Over the coming months, FCM and the members of the National Municipal Rail Safety Working Group will continue to advocate for additional measures to help prevent future rail disasters, improve information sharing and emergency response. On this tragic anniversary, our thoughts are with the community of Lac-Mégantic as we renew our commitment to making Canada's railway system safer for all Canadians.

Sincerely,

Brad Woodside
FCM President
Mayor, City of Fredericton

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