



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

MAY 14 2014

Ms. Diane W. Fish
Deputy Director
The Adirondack Council
103 Hand Avenue
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

Dear Ms. Fish:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2014 regarding the significant increase in crude oil transported by rail through the east side of the Adirondacks. EPA shares your concern and we are taking measures to ensure we can protect human health and the environment within our regulatory authorities. Although EPA does not have regulatory authority over the transport of oil through rail, we are taking necessary steps to prepare for potential spills throughout the rail corridor in New York State.

Regarding your specific request concerning the need for federal involvement in spill contingency planning in the Lake Champlain area, EPA has been engaged with federal, state, county and local response organizations from New York and Vermont over the past several years in joint training and oil and hazardous material spill contingency planning. Since 2009, we have worked closely with our spill response partner agencies, including Clinton County and Essex County Offices of Emergency Services. EPA hosted a multi-agency spills conference in 2010, and oil spill training and exercises in 2011 and 2012.

These efforts have been led by EPA and these activities with the spill response community have also included representation by CP Rail. The exercise held in September 2012 was based upon a crude oil spill which was simulated to have occurred in Rousses Point. Additionally, this multi-agency exercise was one activity among a series of training events, which included an oil spill booming course and an air monitoring course, both which were sponsored by EPA. Two sessions on rail safety training for local firefighters were also delivered by CP Rail.

The spill contingency planning activity conducted to date has been primarily focused upon multi-agency coordination and doesn't address specific action plans for specific areas. EPA is currently working with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to develop such tactical response plans for specific geographic areas. This next step is a very ambitious project, as the ultimate goal is to cover the full inland response area of the state. The first priority of developing such tactical response plans is to cover the main rail corridors, including both the CP Rail line which runs from the Canadian border to the Port of Albany, as well as the CSX rail line.

During the next few months over 500 miles of the CP Rail and CSX main lines will be evaluated to prioritize the development of specific tactical response plans. These priority areas will be based upon proximity of potential spill locations to population centers and environmentally sensitive areas, all of which will be mapped for tactical spill response planning. EPA expects that this activity will be completed by the end of summer 2014.

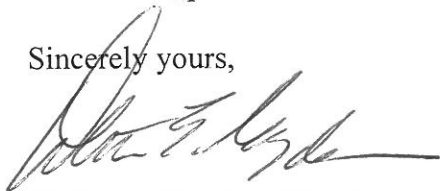
Following this phase, EPA and NYSDEC will share this initial evaluation with county and local response officials across all the evaluated areas in order to ensure local information is taken into account and provide for local modification of identified priorities. This is expected to take place throughout the state during fall of 2014.

Starting in 2015, EPA and NYSDEC will lead the effort to develop specific tactical response plans throughout the state, working through a priority basis. This will generally be done at the county level and is intended to engage with the local response agencies, rail companies, facilities, spill response contractors, and other stakeholder organizations.

EPA is committed to working with our response partner agencies to best prepare for any potential environmental emergency in New York State. We invite the Adirondack Council to join us in this planning effort for those areas along the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain.

I appreciate your interest in spill response planning. If you wish to discuss our specific efforts in more detail, please contact Carl Pellegrino, of my staff, at (732) 321-6794.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter E. Mugdan', written in a cursive style.

Walter E. Mugdan, Director
Emergency & Remedial Response Division