



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Following Kennedy's Call, State Agrees to Hold Crude Oil Emergency Training Drill in WNY in July

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY June 27, 2014

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An Estimated 200 to 300 Outdated DOT-111 Rail Cars Carrying Crude Oil or Ethanol Travel Through Every Day.

With rising levels of crude oil shipped by rail, Kennedy called on NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to help ensure local first-responders are ready and prepared.

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, today announced that the state has responded to his call to hold a training drill simulating a potential crude oil emergency in Western New York, where there has been a rapid increase in crude oil shipped on rail lines through Buffalo, Lackawanna and Cheektowaga. The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) has informed Kennedy that **training drills will be held in Erie County and Niagara County in July** to help prepare local first-responders for the dangers posed by crude oil and other ignitable liquids.

“Every day, trains carrying crude oil roll right through heavily-populated neighborhoods in Buffalo, Lackawanna, Cheektowaga and across Western New York. This surge in crude oil shipped by rail poses a significant safety risk for our community, and local families are growing more concerned,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “Thankfully, New York State has responded to our call and is taking action to help protect our neighborhoods. This training

drill will help ensure local first-responders are fully prepared to respond to the potential dangers posed by the rising levels of crude oil rail shipments in Western New York.”

Following a similar crude oil training drill at the Port of Albany in May, [Senator Kennedy called on the state to conduct training exercises locally](#) to ensure Western New York’s first-responders are fully prepared – and practiced – to respond to possible crude-oil disasters along heavily-populated rail corridors in Western New York. It’s estimated that about 200 to 300 dangerous and outdated DOT-111 rail cars carrying crude oil or ethanol travel through Buffalo every day. These cars are prone to tearing or breaking during derailment – which can lead to large explosions.

The hands-on training drills – during which an ignitable-liquid emergency will be simulated – will be held July 14 and 15 at the Erie County Fire Training Center in Cheektowaga, and July 16 and 17 at the Niagara County Fire Training Center in Lockport. The hands-on training exercises follow classroom training sessions about best practices. DHSES will be offering this training to federal, state and local first-responders in Western New York.

Senator Kennedy has been among the local, state and federal officials who have been on high alert since a devastating train derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec claimed 47 victims and leveled much of the town’s downtown area. Closer to home, a derailment in the Town of Cheektowaga in December – when five cars derailed and fortunately no one was hurt – also spurred rising concern.

In recent years, the amount of crude oil shipped by rail has skyrocketed. In 2008, just 9,500 carloads of U.S. crude oil were shipped by rail. In 2012, the number climbed up to 234,000 carloads, and it shot upward again in 2013 to 434,042 carloads, according to the Association of American Railroads. The production of crude oil has risen across North America, with activity from North Dakota’s Bakken oil fields and the Alberta oil sands in Canada. This

poses serious risks for heavily populated neighborhoods that line railroads throughout Western New York.

“Holding this training-drill to further prepare Western New York’s first-responders for a potential crude-oil emergency is an important next step in our ongoing efforts to address the challenges posed by crude oil shipped on our state's railroads," Kenendy said. "It will reassure area families that their communities are taking appropriate precautions and local authorities are fully prepared to respond to emergency situations in their neighborhoods.”

To view Kennedy's initial letter to DHSES, [click here](#).

To see the DHSES Commissioner's response, [click here](#).

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kenedy.nysenate.gov>.