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## News

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### **U.S. Department of Transportation Seeks Public Input On Rail Car Safety Proposals** *Proposal Includes 111 Tank Car Recommendations*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration is seeking public comment to further enhance the safe transportation of hazardous materials by rail tank cars, including the DOT 111 tank car, a type of non-pressure tank car commonly used in North America. PHMSA’s Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking reflects a collection of stakeholder input on rail car safety, including eight petitions for rulemaking and four National Transportation Safety Board recommendations.

The agency is seeking public comment for 60 days on whether the proposals in the ANPRM would enhance safety, as well as general comments on the regulations that apply to transporting hazardous materials by rail. It also addresses operational issues that could limit or prevent derailments. For instructions about submitting comments and to review the information, the [ANPRM](#) is available online.

“Last year was the safest in railroading history, with train accidents down by 43 percent over the last ten years, and accidents involving a hazmat release down 16 percent,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “As the economy continues to rebound and we see more traffic on our nation’s railways, the Department of Transportation is working hard to ensure our strong record of safety continues. Seeking public feedback and ideas from our stakeholders on safety improvements is an important part of that effort.”

Recommendations in the ANPRM include enhanced tank head and shell puncture resistance systems for 111 tank cars, as well as top fittings protection that exceed current requirements. These steps reflect recommendations from NTSB investigations, while PHMSA has already addressed a fifth recommendation with the issuance of an advisory bulletin regarding the protection of pipeline facilities near railways.

“Now is the time to make sure safety regulations are robust enough for the increased hazmat movement on our rails, roads and in our pipelines, said Administrator Quarterman. “And this proposal is the vehicle for collecting and sharing the best ideas. Rail safety is a national priority, and I encourage everyone to participate and be part of the solution.”

PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman recently visited the Bakken Shale Formation, where she observed rail operations and the application of U.S. DOT regulations. The area is one of the largest contiguous deposits of oil and natural gas in the United States, found in North Dakota and Montana, where energy production has doubled in the past three years. The Bakken is having a significant impact on the nation’s transportation system as operators move gas and hazardous liquids from the region on trains, trucks and pipelines to locations throughout the country. The ANPRM is the latest action taken by PHMSA to improve the safe transport of hazardous materials by rail, including a recent [safety alert](#) advising shippers and carriers that when required liquefied petroleum gas transported in rail tank cars or cylinders must be properly odorized, enabling shippers, carriers and end users to detect leaks. In 2009, a [final rule](#) required newly constructed tank cars that carry toxic-by-inhalation materials to have a combination of thicker outer jackets and/or inner shells and to use full head shields where not already mandated by regulation. PHMSA also participates in several rail safety initiatives, including the Advanced Tank Car Cooperative Project, the Association of American Railroads’ Tank Car Committee and the Liquefied Natural Gas Technical Advisory Group.

*The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.*

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