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Subject: Phillips 66 Railspur/Weak infrastructure of main line rails

Railroads and oil companies are shipping ever-larger amounts of crude by rail, and they are attempting to calm citizens' fears about rail accidents by citing outdated, historical statistics. For example:

The Association of American Railroads proudly notes that in the past, 99.9% of rail shipments of hazardous materials including oil, reached their destination without a spill.

Unfortunately, current data is far more sobering. Looking strictly at oil shipments, spills are spiking. According to the Associated Press -- in 2009, before the oil drilling boom, just one rail oil spill was reported. But now, with the flood of new oil, the landscape is far different. Through 2013, crude oil releases were reported from 137 rail cars versus just one car.

Therefore, you can throw the industry's outdated "odds" out the window. All you need to do is read the news to learn the real facts. Freight trains carrying crude oil, propane and other hazardous materials are going off their tracks at alarming rates because more trains are carrying that material.

I personally rode the train from San Luis to Los Angeles last year, and I was concerned when the train had to slow down to a crawl in some places. I asked the conductor why, and he replied that it was because we were riding on rails that were built at the turn of the century (1900). After hearing that, I didn't really enjoy the rest of my train ride. However, I can't imagine that a train with 80 tankers cars filled with crude oil would be allowed to come down the Cuesta Grade (built in 1894) and go through Cal Poly with its 14,000 students. It's not only a dangerous risk, but unconscionable.

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