

San Luis Coastal Unified School District

1500 Lizzie Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3062
(805) 549-1200

RECEIVED

JAN - 3 2014

PLANNING & BUILDING

January 2, 2014

Murry Wilson
Environmental Resource Specialist
County Planning and Building Department
976 Osos Street, Room 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

Re: EIR Question

Dear Mr. Wilson:

As a representative of the San Luis Coastal Unified School District, I am concerned about the potential increase in crude oil being transported by train through the county and specifically near our school sites. As witnessed recently in Casselton, North Dakota and Lac-Megantic, Quebec, transporting crude oil by train can be very hazardous.

I would like to ask that you address the following concerns:

1. What is the current amount of oil being transported by rail through the county and near our school sites? How much will this project increase that amount?
2. What safety measures are being taken both by the rail roads as well as the oil company to ensure that hazardous situations like those in North Dakota and Quebec do not occur? Are there any safety plans that have been adopted?

While I understand the reasoning and scope of the project, it does bring to light concerns regarding the transporting of crude oil by train through our city and county. San Luis Coastal Unified School District has school sites that are very close to the rails and any type of accident with train cars carrying crude oil could be quite dangerous to our students and staff.

Thank you for addressing my concerns,



Ryan Pinkerton
Assistant Superintendent of Business Services

SLCSD-1

North Dakota residents flee Casselton after oil train explosion



A crew from Little Rock, Ark., endured subzero temperatures overnight to check for any health hazards. "Right now, we're in limbo," a deputy sheriff told the Star Tribune.

Article by: DAVID SHAFFER AND SUSAN HOGAN , Star Tribune

Updated: December 31, 2013 - 10:22 AM

A majority of the 2,300 residents of Casselton, N.D., heeded a warning to leave town Monday after an explosion that produced huge clouds of flames and smoke, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office. "We asked for voluntarily evacuations, and roughly 65 percent of the people left on their own," Deputy Joe Crawford said in phone interview at 3 a.m. Tuesday. Other officials said that estimate was too high, but they declined to offer an alternative number. Crawford said the evacuations were "precautionary" until the situation could be evaluated for health hazards. The explosion happened shortly after 2 p.m. Monday after a BNSF grain train derailed and crashed into a crude oil train near Casselton, which is 20 miles west of Fargo, causing tank cars to explode in towering mushroom-cloud flames. No one was injured in the crash. A monitoring crew from Little Rock, Ark., endured subzero temperatures overnight in order to evaluate the air quality and other possible hazards as a result of the accident. As they worked, the temperature dipped to 15 below with the windchill at 32 below. "It's not the kind of weather they're used to in Arkansas," Crawford said. "But we warned them and they're suited up properly." Law enforcement and emergency crews are also wearing masks as a safety measure until more is known about any threats to public health. "Right now, we're in limbo," the deputy said. The National Transportation Safety Board has a team of investigators en route to the scene, and a news conference was scheduled for 9 a.m. to update the situation. In the initial hours after the explosion, authorities told residents to stay indoors to avoid the smoke as shifting winds raised concerns among officials. Later, when residents were urged to evacuate, some drove to Fargo, where a shelter had been set up for them. BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth said the train carrying grain derailed first, then knocked several cars of the oil train off adjoining tracks. BNSF said both trains had more than 100 cars each. BNSF said it believed about 20 cars caught fire after its oil train left the tracks. The sheriff's office said it thought 10 cars were on fire. "It was black smoke and then there were probably four explosions in the next hour to hour and a half," said Eva Fercho, a Casselton resident who saw the fiery aftermath. The cars were still burning as darkness fell, and authorities said they would be allowed to burn out. An estimated 11 to 12 crude oil unit trains depart daily from the oil region in western North Dakota. Lacking sufficient pipelines, 69 percent of the state's oil is currently shipped to market by rail. The main

railroads, BNSF and Canadian Pacific, have tracks through the Twin Cities. Fercho said the BNSF main line runs right through Casselton, and just two blocks from her home. "We are very thankful it didn't happen in the city limits," she said. The accident also spared the Tharaldson Ethanol plant, west of Casselton. Plant Manager Ryan Carter said the accident was about 2 miles away from the plant, but the burning tank cars were visible from there. "It was pretty much flames and smoke," said Carter, who estimated that about 30 tank cars were involved. Carter Hackmann, who lives about a mile away from the site of the wreck, said he heard at least three explosions, and took photographs from his house of billowing flames and smoke that resembled a mushroom cloud. Ryan Toop, who lives about a half-mile away, said he heard explosions and drove as close as about two city blocks to the fire, which erupted on a day when temperatures were below zero. "I rolled down the window, and you could literally keep your hands warm," Toop said. Jeff Zent, a spokesman for Gov. Jack Dalrymple, said the National Guard was on alert if needed. North Dakota officials have said that even more crude oil is expected to move by rail in 2014. The state is approaching 1 million barrels per day in output, and trails only Texas and the separately counted Gulf of Mexico in U.S. oil production. In July, a runaway train loaded with North Dakota crude oil crashed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people and destroying that city's downtown as tank cars exploded and burned. *The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

[E-mail story](#) | [View on full site](#) | [Back to top](#)

[Home](#) | [Latest news](#) | [Local](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Politics](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Nation](#) | [World](#) |
[Weather](#) | [Daily Deals](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Homes](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Movie Finder](#)

[Sign in](#) | [Back to top](#) | [View full site](#) | [News apps](#) | [Help](#) | [Manage Subscription](#)

© 2014 Star Tribune
Powered by Limelight Networks

From: "Ryan Pinkerton" <RPinkerton@slcusd.org>
To: <mwilson@co.slo.ca.us>
Date: 12/23/2013 09:17 AM
Subject: Hazardous Trains

Murray,

A few months ago a story ran in the Tribune about trains going through SLO that may carry hazardous materials. Can you give me an update on where this stands? What does our school district need to know? Who is overseeing this change? I know that there are safety requirements related to schools when this occurs. Not that we are taking a stand against it, I just want to know who to talk to if there are questions from the public.

Thank you,

Ryan Pinkerton

Assistant Superintendent of Business Services San Luis Coastal Unified School District