

Oil Trains in Baltimore: Too Dangerous for the Rails

Big Oil companies' push to extract and refine more extreme forms of oil has led to a surge of trains carrying toxic, explosive, and climate-polluting oil on our nation's rail lines.

Oil train traffic has grown by 4,000 percent in the past six years, due to the rapid increase in fracking for oil in the Bakken shale fields of North Dakota and in tar sands oil extraction in Canada.ⁱ An alarming rate of derailments and explosions across North America has followed.

In Maryland, oil trains are a growing danger to communities near rail lines and to Baltimore in particular. The oil industry is targeting Baltimore — with its large and centrally located port — as a gateway to ship crude oil to East Coast refineries, or worldwide if the current export ban is lifted.

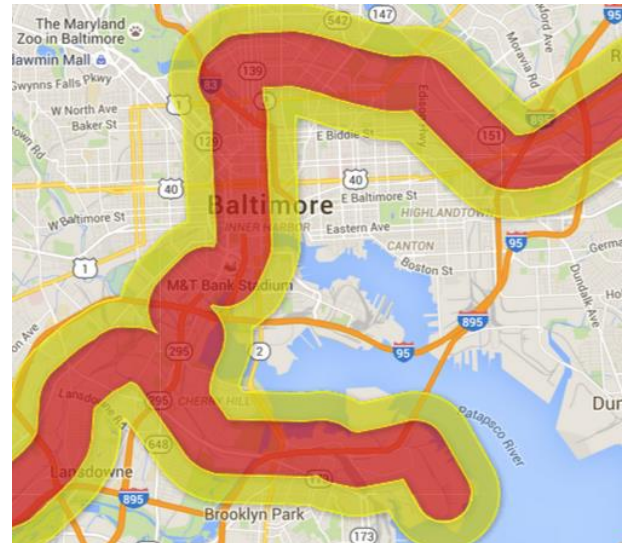
To protect our communities and climate, CCAN is fighting to put the brakes on Big Oil's plans to use Baltimore as a gateway for extreme crude oil.

OIL TRAINS IN BALTIMORE: PUTTING 165,000 RESIDENTS AT RISK

- 100 million gallons of crude oil was shipped out of South Baltimore over the years 2013 and 2014.ⁱⁱ
- Substantially more crude oil passes through Maryland, but rail companies keep the routes secret and have even sued to prevent the state from releasing route information to the public.ⁱⁱⁱ
- An analysis of known rail routes and U.S. Census data shows that 165,000 Baltimore residents live and work in the oil train "blast zone" — the area that would be directly impacted if a train were to derail and explode.
- Oil trains threaten to worsen air quality in communities like South Baltimore, where residents already breathe in some of the dirtiest air in Maryland.^{iv}

EXPLOSIVE OIL: TOO DANGEROUS FOR THE RAILS, OUR HEALTH, AND OUR CLIMATE

- The Bakken crude oil these trains carry to the East Coast is closer to jet fuel than it is to traditional crude oil — making it far more likely that a derailment will lead to an explosion.^v
- Five oil trains derailed and exploded across North America in just the first five months of 2015.
- Unrefined crude oil contains benzene and other toxic carcinogens. Trains are known to seep these chemicals as they pass through communities, making them a public health threat.
- Natural gas is a byproduct of oil production. The combination of methane leakage and the common practice of burning, or "flaring," the gas on-site emits large quantities of methane -- an extremely potent greenhouse gas — into the atmosphere.^{vi}



The city of Baltimore at risk. This map, produced by ForestEthics, shows the evacuation zone (red) for oil train derailments and the potential impact zone (yellow) in case of an oil train fire. <blast-zone.org>



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: BEATING BACK BIG OIL'S PLANS

Mayors, first responders, neighborhood associations, and citizens are coming together to take a stand against oil trains — including in Baltimore.

In June 2015 after reviewing hundreds of comments from experts and citizens, Maryland regulators hit the pause button on a Texas-based company's plans to build a new crude oil shipping terminal in South Baltimore.^{vii}

This move will prevent an immediate increase in oil trains moving through Baltimore neighborhoods — for now. But stronger city, state and federal action is urgently needed to protect our health, safety and climate.

TAKE ACTION:

LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS CAN PROTECT COMMUNITIES FROM DANGEROUS OIL TRAINS

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL: Councilmembers can put a moratorium on any new permits until local emergency management, health, and safety officials can study the impacts and dangers associated with crude-by-rail and crude oil shipping within densely populated urban areas.

STATE LEGISLATORS: Our state legislators can support legislation during the next General Assembly session to require rail companies to disclose the route, frequency and volume of crude oil being transported by rail. Delegate Clarence Lam introduced such a bill in 2015.

FEDERAL LEADERS: Our federal leaders can enact an immediate ban on oil trains, because there is NO safe way to transport extreme tar sands and Bakken crude oil. At a minimum, the Department of Transportation can take the oldest and most dangerous cars, including DOT-111s, off the rails.

ⁱ American Association of Railroads, Moving Crude Oil by Rail, July 2014, Pg. 1-2.

ⁱⁱ Rector, Kevin. "Crude Oil continues to flow through Maryland amid debate about safety." *Baltimore Sun*. 30 March, 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rector, Kevin. "2 railroads sue Md. to prevent disclosure of crude oil shipments." *Baltimore Sun*. 28 July, 2014.

^{iv} Orvis, Robbie, Abel Russ and Leah Kelly. "Air Quality Profile of Curtis Bay, Brooklyn and Hawkins Point, Maryland." Environmental Integrity Project. March 2012

^v Cook, Lynn. "Bakken Crude Is Highly Volatile, Oil Study Shows." *Wall Street Journal*. 14 May 2014
<<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304908304579562471022167310>>

^{vi} Styles, Geoff. "Bakken Shale Gas Flaring Highlights Global Problem." Corporate Blog. Pacific Energy Development, 7 July 2014
<<http://www.pacificenergydevelopment.com/corporate-blog/bakken-shale-gas-flaring-highlights-global-problem>>

^{vii} Barker, Jeff. "State denies permit for Baltimore crude oil terminal." *Baltimore Sun*. 3 June, 2015.