

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM12.2	ACTION			Ward:All
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Renewing Call for Improved Rail Safety - by Councillor Mary Fragedakis, seconded by Councillor Sarah Doucette

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mary Fragedakis, seconded by Councillor Sarah Doucette, recommends that:

1. City Council renew its call for the Government of Canada to improve rail safety in Canada and call on the Government of Canada to:
 - a. address any outstanding issues in the City Council motions to improve rail safety regulations and operations since the derailment in Lac Megantic on July 6, 2013;
 - b. increase government regulation and enforcement for the transportation of dangerous substances over rail;
 - c. provide Transport Canada with the necessary funding and resources to hire and train an adequate number of dangerous goods and rail safety inspectors to ensure proper oversight of the rail industry;
 - d. provide municipal input into the mandatory railway risk assessment process, which includes identifying and assessing alternative routes for transporting dangerous goods; and
 - e. prevent the downloading of rail safety and emergency response costs to local taxpayers related to liability insurance and coverage for catastrophic incidents.

Summary

The tragedy in Lac Megantic, on July 6, 2013, and a number of other incidents highlighted deficiencies in rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods in Canada's urban areas.

The Government of Canada is responsible for the safe operations of railways in the country through the Railway Safety Act (1985) and certain other Acts, regulations, standards, guidelines and policies in consequence thereof.

On July 16, 2013, City Council adopted MM37.56 and several subsequent motions calling on the Government of Canada to improve rail safety regulations and operations including but not limited to the recommendations of the Railway Safety Act Review.

There have been improvements to rail safety lately but there is a great deal of evidence that these have not been enough to address the seriousness of this issue. In October 2015, a derailed train Montreal hit a home leading and subsequently Montreal Mayor to strengthen further rail safety rules. In January 2016, CBC reported about a Transport Canada letter to a major railway about an 'immediate threat' to rail safety due to 'excessive fatigue'. Previous CBC reports have found that:

- Analysis of the railway database kept by the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) that found three times the number of runaway trains than previously reported.
- That only nine of the 459 runaway-related occurrences - or about two per cent - have been fully investigated by the Transportation Safety Board.
- Almost a quarter of the 459 runaway occurrences in the past 12 years involved dangerous goods.

Further incidents and investigations have community and rail safety groups very concerned and City Council should support their call for further action on this important issue.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM12.2