

Another Norfolk Southern train derails 15 miles from site of East Palestine, Ohio disaster

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Do you work at Norfolk Southern or another Class I railway? Do you live in East Palestine or a neighboring community? Tell us what you know about the East Palestine disaster by filling out the form below. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

Late Wednesday night, another Norfolk Southern train derailed only 15 miles away from the site of the February 3rd derailment and toxic chemical spill of a Norfolk Southern train in East Palestine, Ohio. The latest accident occurred in New Castle, Pennsylvania just across the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line.

Nine of the trains 200 cars derailed. Photos show several of the derailed tanker cars overturned on a bridge of the Beaver—Mahoning River, which flows into the Ohio River. Fortunately, the tanker cars were empty at the time.

Officials say none of the derailed cars were carrying hazardous materials. However, one car did contain paraffin, a wax used in the making of crayons and candles.

As of Friday morning, two tanker cars were still on the bridge and equipment was being brought in to try and remove them. Local police have closed the nearby road. The bridge is owned by Norfolk Southern and until the company can remove the two tankers and verify that no damage has been done to the bridge, the road will remain closed.

Nearby residents had in mind the East Palestine disaster, which poisoned the soil, groundwater and air of that town, when they heard the train derail. Following a “controlled burn” of overturned tanker cars, apparently carried out without even informing federal investigators, many of the 5,000 residents of East Palestine and the surrounding area complained of burning eyes, noses and throats as well as vomiting. Many will suffer long term health consequences as a

result of the release of vinyl chloride and dioxins, which are known carcinogens.

Vern Geminiani told WTAE a Pittsburgh-based news station that he ran out of his house when they heard the crash.

“I heard the train whistle coming. It’s normal here hearing the train go by, but it ended up being a loud commotion, a bang, and then the house shook, and I looked out the window, and I knew something was wrong— I was worried about hazard material. I was worried if we were going to get evacuated. What is going to happen, or what are we breathing right now?” Geminiani said.

Another resident, Sandra Thaemert, told the station she was worried for her children. “We made sure there was no toxins because we have seven kids in our house. We shut the windows. We shut our doors. I told them don’t open up the doors just stay in the house until we find out because I could smell the smoke in the air,” Sandra Thaemert told WTAE.

WBNS 10TV, a news station from Central Ohio, provided this chopper view of the crash site.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-L2oKBF2c4&t=99s>

A railroad worker commenting on the video explained: “I work in the field boots on ground. Trains derail everyday. In the yard and on the main. They wanna push the narrative because of Ohio. We been saying the problem is trains are way [too] long and it causes issues. I’m glad it’s being talked about now because all railroads care about is profits.”

A retired railroad engineer who had worked 40 years for several different railroads, including 20 years for Norfolk Southern, told the *World Socialist Website* that accidents like the one in East Palestine and the one in New Castle are all too predictable due to the unsafe

length of trains.

“It is important that you carefully control the weight of the train, both the total weight of train and that of each car. If you put empty cars, especially flatbeds which are the lightest of all the cars, in the middle of a train, they will be picked right up off of the tracks when going around bends,” he said.

The companies are increasing the length of trains with 150, 200 and even 250 cars while cutting crews and maintenance. “The companies don’t care about that anymore they just want to make the trains as long as possible so they can make as much money on each train,” he said. “The East Palestine disaster was clearly preventable. For nearly an hour they knew that they had a bad axle, yet they kept the train moving.”

On February 3rd, 38 cars of a Norfolk Southern train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. A small town of about 5,000 people on the Pennsylvania border. Eleven of the derailed cars were carrying hazardous material and several erupted into flames and exploded.

The most recent derailment in New Castle, Pennsylvania points to the fact that claims after the fact by Norfolk Southern and CEO Alan Shaw that the company was taking safety as its top priority was just lip service. More than three months since the February 3rd derailment Norfolk Southern has yet to finish the cleanup of the accident site. They are being given a blank check by federal regulators, who refused even to test East Palestine for dioxins weeks after the crash, as well as Congress, which last year banned a strike by railroaders in which safety would have been a key issue.

In addition to the health concerns, many residents are also suffering financially from its impact. Last week, the owners of CeramSource and CeramFab, which manufactures specialty bricks used in steel manufacturing, announced that it was closing and laying off all 30 of its employees.

“It’s a nightmare, and we are still living in the nightmare, and I don’t know when we can get out of this,” said Edwin Wang, the owner told News 5 of Cleveland.

Employees came back to work after they were told the area was safe by Norfolk Southern and government officials, but soon many workers were getting headaches, nosebleeds and coughing he told channel 5. “We sent them to the ER right away. They were

diagnosed with chemical bronchitis ... We are out of money, we are out of time, we are out of the labor to continue our manufacturing,” Wang said.

Area farmers are also feeling the impact as they have been unable to sell their livestock and crops as both they and consumers worry about health effects of their products. Housing prices have also plummeted as many families try to leave the area, especially those with young children.

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