

The Buffalo Common Council

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January 3, 2018

Dear Laurie and Bruce,

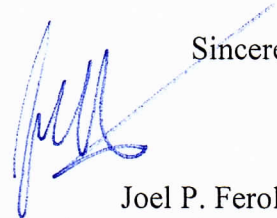
Thank you for your letter dated December 5, 2017, regarding the Canadian Pacific Beltline Railroad accident that took place on September 13, 2017. My office has spoken directly with the Buffalo Fire Department's Haz-Mat Division to get as much information as possible. I will address your concerns in the order of your letter:

1. The City of Buffalo does not receive a list ahead of time regarding what chemicals are being transported by the rail companies. The Buffalo Fire Department is informed of the transported chemicals as they arrive onsite by the freight manifest. The BFD is prepared to contain the most commonly transported chemicals at any time. All chemicals transported on railways throughout the United States are regulated by the Federal Government;
2. There is currently no procedure for an independent inspection of railroad bridges because it is regulated by the Federal Government. However, I have been informed that the current bridges are in safe working condition. A major factor in the lifespan of bridges is that current trains weigh significantly less than the trains that were used when the bridges were built given advancements in modern technology;
3. The BFD has its own Haz-Mat division, which is the largest in the region. Their primary duty and concern is the safety of all residents around an accident site. As they regularly run drills, they currently have a response time of approximately 6 minutes. The BFD's Haz-Mat division is trained in simulations specifically dealing with train accidents and derailments and many firefighters travel all over the country for specialized training to be prepared for these types of situations; and,
4. The BFD is in charge of assessing dangers and making recommendations to the immediate surrounding areas including evacuation plans. In the event of an evacuation, the BFD would alert the media, and go door to door to inform residents of the situation. The BFD would involve other agencies (Buffalo Police Department, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, etc.) if they lacked the number of professionals needed to properly address the hazards and inform the residents.

In sum, the City of Buffalo, thanks to the Buffalo Fire Department, is properly trained and prepared to deal with an accident that involves the transportation of chemicals on the City's railroads and is called to respond all over the Buffalo-Niagara region to assist other municipalities due to its professionalism.

Public safety is a main concern for my office, and if I can be of more assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joel P. Feroletto
Delaware District Council Member