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## **Oil by Rail – CN plans to carry tarsands oil**

According to recent reports, Enbridge has been working closely with Canadian National Railway (American owned) to transport up to 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day in unit trains from the Alberta tarsands to the port of Prince Rupert, BC. This would be an alternate route rather than building a pipeline to Kitimat.

CN even has a [webpage](#) devoted to this service which they call “Pipeline on Rail” system which has special rail cars to handle the oil.

Here is a list of accidents in recent memory:

- In August 2005, a CN train derailed alongside Lake Wabamun, east of Edmonton, dumping almost 200,000 litres of oil into the reservoir. In May, 2010, Alberta health officials issued a warning to residents and tourists using Lake Wabamun to watch for balls of tar and oil deposits.
- Days later, several rail cars loaded with sodium hydroxide spilled into the Cheakamus River near Squamish, B.C., killing half a million fish.
- In 2009, the Transportation Safety Board heavily criticized CN Rail’s safety system in a report on an accident where two rail workers rode an out-of-control train to their deaths near Lillooet, B.C. The report concluded the train didn’t have the proper brakes to slow it down on B.C.’s mountainous terrain. The Transportation Safety Board singled out the failure of CN’s safety management system after the crash.
- The TSB also said a lack of safety guidelines contributed to a January 2007 CN Rail derailment in Montmagny, Que., where four cars containing sulphuric acid left the tracks.

In the meantime, CN railworkers have voted to go on strike January 25th if labour talks fail. Their union counterparts at CP Rail could go on strike February 8th. One can only hope that these railworkers will also push for more safety regulations.

To see some images of the terrain around Prince Rupert, check out this interesting blog, [“Prince Rupert Rail Images”](#).

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