

Raitt wants MPs to grill CN over derailments

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OTTAWA - Transport Minister Lisa Raitt says the government is concerned about the recent spate of oil-by-rail train derailments in northern Ontario and wants CN Rail called on the carpet.

Raitt, speaking to the House of Commons transport committee, says Transport Canada inspectors are on the site of CN's weekend derailment near Gogama, Ont., and an aerial surveillance team has flown over the scene where oil tank cars crashed and burned.

In the past month, four trains carrying crude oil have derailed in the United States and Canada, sparking major fires, polluting waterways and forcing some evacuations of homes.

Opposition MPs on the transport committee questioned whether there are enough government inspectors monitoring rail safety given the exponential growth in oil-by-rail shipments over the past five years.

Raitt, however, twice asked that the committee take a closer look at the operations of CN — a suggestion taken up by her parliamentary secretary, who says committee testimony would help establish whether the railway company is co-operating with investigators.

A spokesman for CN, Mark Hallman, tells The Canadian Press the railway is fully co-operating and would be happy to appear before parliamentarians in Ottawa.

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By The Canadian Press