

Canada's rail safety standards a failure, NDP says

By: Sudbury Northern Life Staff Mar 11, 2015

The federal New Democrats today said Northern Ontario needs to know what environmental impact can be expected to the Mattagami River from the two recent CN Rail derailments.

On March 7, 35 cars hauling crude oil from Alberta jumped the tracks near Gogama and caught fire, dumping an unknown quantity of oil into the Makami River, which feeds the Mattagami River, one the North's major rivers. This was three weeks after another CN train hauling crude derailed and caught fire, also near Gogama.

“After two derailments near Gogama in under a month, it is clear rail safety standards are insufficient,” said Nickel Belt MP Claude Gravelle. “Both of these crashes involved the upgraded rail cars and the result was still devastating. The minister must make rail safety a priority.”

Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus said the federal government needs to tell northerners what damage has been done.

“What has CN done to our river?” he said in a news release. “We want honest answers about the damage done to water, wildlife and fish spawning. We want the Minister of Transport and CN to come clean with northerners.”

New Democrats are also calling on CN Rail to participate in Transportation Committee hearings into rail safety, and to co-operate with Transportation Safety Board investigations into both derailments.