

# EPA to Hold Public Meeting and Resource Fair on Norfolk Southern Train Derailment, Interagency Community Outreach Teams Distribute Over 1,500 Informational Flyers to Affected Residents

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio – Today, the Biden-Harris Administration announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will hold a public meeting and resource fair at East Palestine High School regarding the Norfolk Southern Train Derailment. In addition to EPA, officials from the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies will be present, as will representatives from Norfolk Southern. The meeting will take place at 360 W Grant St from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.

The administration also shared that Interagency Community Outreach teams have distributed more than 1,500 informational flyers across the affected area, hand-delivering critical information to residents and businesses. By the end of the day today, these teams will have connected with every Ohio and Pennsylvania residence and business that local leaders and state officials have requested they visit.

## Operational Updates:

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA has conducted 589 home re-entry screenings to date and continues 24/7 air monitoring at 16 stations throughout the community. No detections of vinyl chloride or hydrogen chloride have been identified.
- In response to concerns shared by residents, EPA will require Norfolk Southern to sample directly for dioxins under our oversight, and we will direct the company to conduct immediate clean up if contaminants from the derailment are found at levels that jeopardize people's health. EPA has, and will continue to, sample for "indicator chemicals," which based on test results to date, suggest a low probability for release of dioxins from this incident.
- EPA is also reviewing Norfolk Southern's plan to remove the railroad tracks and to excavate the contaminated soil at the accident site. If EPA and the unified command approves, work could begin as soon as tomorrow.
- State, local, and federal officials are holding a public meeting and resource fair this evening at the high school from 6 to 9 p.m. Staff from EPA, HHS, Ohio EPA and other agencies will be present, as will representatives from Norfolk Southern.
- EPA's community welcome center at 25 North Market Street is now open to the community from 8 to 8 every day.

### Department of Transportation (DOT) & National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

- Today USDOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is issuing a Safety Advisory to the major freight railroads that presses them to take immediate safety measures to look at the performance of the protective coverings over the pressure relief valves.

- NTSB, an independent federal agency, is leading the investigation into the cause of the derailment. Yesterday NTSB issued an Investigative Update with factual findings on their investigation on the ground: <https://www.nts.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/NR20230214.aspx>
- Within hours of the derailment, staff from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration staff were on the scene to support the NTSB investigation.
- Upon completion of the investigation, DOT will use all relevant authorities to ensure accountability and improve safety.
- DOT is demanding immediate actions from the Class I railroads, announcing continued and expanded action from DOT, and calling on Congress to take actions that will hold the industry accountable.
- More information here: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-fact-sheet-steps-forward-freight-rail-industry-safety>

#### Health and Human Services (HHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

- CDC/ATSDR is conducting Assessment of Chemical Exposure (ACE) investigation surveys in East Palestine today. As of March 2, CDC has completed 152 surveys in Ohio and 25 in Pennsylvania.
- CDC is joining federal, state, and local partners at the EPA and partner organizations' public community meetings through Sunday. CDC/ATSDR will continue to engage with impacted residents and communities and provide information about available public health resources.
- The agency also continues to prepare to deploy ACE responder surveys for derailment first responders.

#### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- As of today, FEMA has nearly 70 personnel on the ground that are assisting with outreach across the affected communities to ensure that we are meeting people where they are and connecting them to critical federal, state and local resources.
- Specifically, Interagency Community Outreach staff have been going door to door in the affected area sharing information about available resources. These interagency teams have been distributing a tri-fold flyer developed by EPA and FEMA that contains all of the information a resident might need to get help.
- Since last Saturday, these teams have been engaging with affected residents in the community. More than 1,500 flyers have been handed to individuals or dropped off at their homes and businesses, and by the end of the day today, these teams will have connected with every Ohio and Pennsylvania residence and business that local leaders and state officials have requested they visit.
- Through an interagency agreement, FEMA has been supporting EPA's activities by utilizing our National Processing Service Center (NPSC) to assist with responding to inquiries and direct those with questions to appropriate resources. As of today, the call center has responded to over 900 calls.
- As FEMA staff help interagency partners with this outreach, they will continue to support

operational coordination, logistical planning and unity of effort.

#### Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)

- ORSANCO and its water utility partners are continuing to routinely monitor downstream water quality conditions from the confluence of Little Beaver Creek and the Ohio River near ORM 40, through the continued use of the Organics Detection System (ODS). The ODS collects and analyzes Ohio River and select tributary samples multiple times daily for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to ensure the water supply is suitable for use by downstream users. All ODS stations downstream of the train derailment site, including the closest stations in Weirton and Wheeling, WV, are currently reporting non-detects for VOCs. ORSANCO has received numerous questions about how long the organization plans to continue monitoring the Ohio River for n-butyl acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl acrylate and 2-ethylhexanol. The Organics Detection System will continue to operate with these additional chemicals calibrated to supplement the normal suite of 30 volatile organic chemicals routinely sampled for on a daily basis. With the invaluable help of our Ohio River drinking water professionals that operate this system on site, ORSANCO is prepared to continue to monitor for additional threads of the very, diluted spill remnants that may reach the Ohio River in the future. ORSANCO will do so until it is clear that this enhanced monitoring is no longer needed. ORSANCO anticipates that this will be for several more weeks or months.

#### Norfolk Southern Corp.

- Norfolk Southern continues to provide reimbursement for expenses incurred by residents affected by the evacuation, in addition to compensation for inconvenience during the evacuation, through our Family Assistance Center. Acceptance of these reimbursements and/or inconvenience compensation is not a settlement of any future claim.

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