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Ald. Terry Witkowski  
(414) 286-2883

## **Bakken crude transport spurs call for thorough, more frequent rail inspections**

Alderman Terry L. Witkowski has drafted Common Council legislation urging state and federal regulators to conduct immediate and thorough inspections of the railroad tracks, crossings and bridges on which highly combustible Bakken crude oil is carried through Milwaukee.

Alderman Witkowski, chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, said the legislation (**Council file number 158072**) also expresses the city's support for federal legislation increasing overall safety on rail line and the frequency of rail inspections.

"In my view, there is nothing more important than ensuring the safety of Milwaukee's citizens, and based on visual checks of railroad bridge appearance alone, it doesn't breed confidence in the public that railroads are doing what they should to adequately maintain their infrastructure," Alderman Witkowski said.

The file, co-sponsored by **Alderman Robert J. Bauman**, indicates that at an increasing rate, oil is being transported via rail, and there has been a marked increase in oil train derailments, with the U.S. Department of Transportation predicting an average of 10 derailments of trains hauling oil per year. In addition, trains carrying Bakken crude through Milwaukee pass through densely populated areas across many aldermanic districts, including downtown and the Historic Third Ward, and in the event of a derailment and subsequent evacuation procedure, Milwaukee has an estimated 100,000 people living within a half mile of the rail lines.

Alderman Witkowski said the trains can reach speeds of approximately 40 miles per hour when traveling through the 13<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District. "It is clear that we need state and federal regulators to step up and make sure these bridges, tracks and crossings are safe enough for Bakken crude trains, and that is what my legislation is asking for," he said.