

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



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May 12, 2014

Commissioner Jerome M. Hauer
NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
1220 Washington Avenue
State Office Campus
Building 7A Suite 710
Albany, NY 12242

Dear Commissioner Hauer:

I write to offer my appreciation of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services for holding an emergency training drill at the Port of Albany to simulate a possible crude oil spill, and to request that a similar training drill take place in the Buffalo/Cheektowaga area. We have seen an exponential increase in the amount of crude oil being shipped by train through Western New York, and our region has also experienced multiple derailments in recent years. In many locations, these crude oil trains are passing within yards of concentrated residential neighborhoods; a training drill would help to reassure residents that local and state first-responders are ready for the challenges a crude oil disaster could present.

In December 2013, immediately following a train derailment in Cheektowaga, I wrote to the state's Commissioner of Transportation, Joan McDonald, to request that the state undertake a top-to-bottom review of its safety standards for rail transport of highly-combustible materials such as crude oil, and I was thrilled to see the state had recognized this potential risk when Governor Cuomo issued an executive order to conduct a comprehensive review. It is important that first-responders here in Western New York are able to take advantage of the crucial lessons learned by this review. New York State has taken aggressive actions to address crude oil safety concerns, and Western New York should continue to be a part of that.

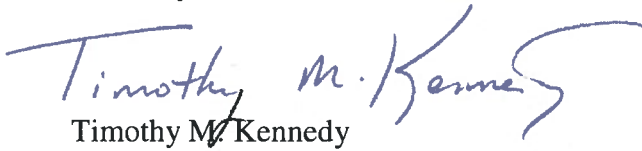
As you know, since 2008, we have seen the number of carloads of crude oil shipped by rail skyrocket from 9,500 carloads to upwards of 434,00 carloads in 2013. And just last month, we saw the danger posed by these shipments when 15 carloads of crude oil derailed and caught fire in Virginia. Thankfully there were no injuries, but hundreds were forced to evacuate their homes, and oil from the trains spilled into the nearby James River. Every day, mile-long trains carrying this same crude oil are seen rolling through rail yards in Buffalo, and they pose a real safety risk to residents. Again, I respectfully request that the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services undertake a crude oil emergency training drill here in the Buffalo/Cheektowaga area. I



have also reached out to the Erie County Department of Emergency Services to request that they partner with you in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter, and I hope to work closely with you and your office on this issue as we move forward. Governor Cuomo, DHSES and the entire administration have demonstrated tremendous leadership in your collective efforts to prevent and prepare for emergencies, and I encourage you to make a Western New York training drill the state's next step. If you have any questions, or if I may be of assistance in any way, as always, I welcome your call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy M. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Timothy M. Kennedy
New York State Senator, 63rd District