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NEWS

NTSB releases final train derailment report; rail safety legislation introduced in House

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released its [full report](#) this week on the East Palestine derailment, which mirrors the key findings that were released last month and summarized in the [June 28 NGFA Newsletter](#). Importantly, the NTSB report recommendations do not call on Congress to adopt legislation.

However, House lawmakers have introduced legislation similar to the "Railway Safety Act" (S.576) introduced in the Senate last year. The "Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2024," introduced this week by Reps. Troy Nehls, R-Texas, and Seth Moulton, D-Mass., includes several provisions unrelated to the recommendations outlined in the NTSB report. These include expanded U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) authorities related to regulating train length and weight and additional pre-departure railcar inspection requirements.

According to NTSB's findings, a rail car's defective wheel bearing caused the derailment and subsequent hazardous material release. The Board found that a visual rail car inspection failed to catch the failing wheel bearing and thus NTSB's recommendation is not for more visual inspections but instead for research to create regulations on bearing defect detection systems. NTSB is also calling for the accelerated phaseout of DOT-111 cars in hazmat service because they are more likely to become compromised during derailments. Notably, NTSB did not identify train length as a problem in its findings.

NGFA will continue communication with lawmakers and stakeholders about the impacts of potential rail safety legislation.

Cybersecurity webinar focuses on threats to food and ag

The Food and Agriculture - Information Sharing and Analysis Center ([Food and Ag-ISAC](#)) is hosting a [free webinar](#), “Farm-to-Table Threats: An Overview of the Food and Ag Cybersecurity Landscape,” on July 25 at 2 p.m. ET.

Speakers from the Food and Ag-ISAC and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) will discuss current and potential threats to the food and ag sector. The threat briefing will include an overview of APT and Nation State motivations, supply chain threats, and an analysis of ransomware trends in 2023 and the first half of 2024.

The webinar is open to the public – register [here!](#)

NGFA announced on May 30 its participation in the Food and Ag-ISAC as an industry partner to increase collaboration on cybersecurity and threat intelligence sharing. Food and Ag-ISAC provides weekly threat reports to association partners, threat briefings, and cybersecurity thought leadership. In April, the Food and Ag-ISAC released its first [ransomware report](#), which revealed that the food and ag supply chain was the seventh most targeted industry for ransomware attacks in 2023.

View more information on ngfa.org/cybersecurity.

Canadian rail labor strike decision expected Aug. 9

U.S. lawmakers and agricultural shippers are warning that a potential strike by Canadian railroad workers could damage both nations’ economies and have requested that the Canadian government recognize the essential nature of agricultural rail transportation.

Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) and Canadian National Railway (CN) workers represented by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference voted in late June to authorize a strike. Before a strike can occur, the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) must issue its ruling on the shipments required to continue during a work stoppage. This ruling is expected to be finalized by Aug. 9.

This is the second time the union has authorized a strike this year. Members previously approved a strike on May 1, but the federal government requested that CIRB begin its safety investigation. CN noted in a July 12 statement that no work stoppage can occur until either party files the required 72-hour notice after CIRB issues its decision.

Meanwhile, Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, sent a July 17 letter to Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, stressing the need to keep railways open and operational.

“Railroads play a key operational role in the trade relationship, offering a cost-efficient and reliable means of transportation,” Cramer wrote. “Any disruption to the transport of these essential products poses risks to consumers and our economies.

“Those in the agricultural community are particularly vulnerable to a possible strike,” continued Cramer. “They rely heavily on rail transport during the harvest season. Disruptions to this transportation option

would delay the delivery of agricultural goods and a strike could lead to potential food shortages and higher prices for consumers. This concern is exacerbated by the fact there are limited alternative transportation options available to shippers should a disruption occur.”

After Canadian rail labor unions voted to strike in May, NGFA said in a [letter](#) to CIRB that “shutdowns or slowdowns of rail-dependent facilities would result “in harmful consequences for Canada’s agricultural producers and industry as well as domestic and global food security,”

NGFA noted that many of its member companies rely on rail services that transit to and via Canada. A strike or lockout “would lead to ripple effects across the entire industry.”

For example, the livestock industry depends on rail to deliver corn and other feed grains, and biofuels operations, flour mills and agricultural export facilities require uninterrupted rail service. “A stoppage of rail service would materially harm Canada’s farmgate prices for commodities, Canada’s ag shippers and exporters and its global customers,” NGFA stated.

“The impact of a strike would be particularly severe as trucking is not a viable option for many agricultural shippers due to their high-volume needs and the long distances for many of the movements,” NGFA noted.

USDA gives update on verification efforts for GHG emissions

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a July 12 [update](#) about its efforts to improve climate mitigation estimates for conservation programs and the National Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks.

As part of the update, USDA has made available several [presentations](#) that provide information about the seven workplans associated with improving greenhouse gas measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification (MMVR) and progress made to date toward accomplishing workplan goals. Previously, USDA made available a [fact sheet](#) that highlighted its efforts in this area.

STB to host hearing on "Growth in the Freight Rail Industry"

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) announced a hearing on “Growth in the Freight Rail Industry” scheduled for Sept. 15-16 and has invited the Class I railroads to testify on how they plan to reverse the trend of decreasing carloads. NGFA will keep members informed on witnesses and statements at the hearing.

Biden nominates CFTC commissioner for FDIC chair

President Joe Biden last month announced the nomination of Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) commissioner Christy Goldsmith Romero for Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) chair. To fill Romero’s CFTC seat, the president has nominated Julie Brinn Siegel from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Banking Committee on July 11, Romero told senators she would implement a “complete overhaul” of the way FDIC manages its employees if she is confirmed. President Biden nominated Romero to replace FDIC Chair Martin Gruenberg following an

independent investigation that found the FDIC failed to protect its staff from sexual harassment, discrimination and other misconduct.

If Romero is confirmed to lead FDIC, Congress will consider Siegel to fill her role at the CFTC. Siegel is the senior coordinator for management at OMB. Before joining OMB, she served as Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's deputy chief of staff and led the Biden-Harris transition team's efforts related to economic policy personnel. Previously she worked as senior counsel for economic policy for Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. Before working on Capitol Hill, Siegel was counselor to the general counsel and senior adviser in the Office of the Director at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Earlier in her career, Siegel worked for the Office of the White House Counsel, the White House Council of Economic Advisers, OMB, and for former White House Chief of Staff Bill Daley. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Law School.

EVENTS

Record crowd expected at CONVEY'24

NGFA, Grain Journal, and the Grain and Elevator Processing Society (GEAPS) are expecting its largest crowd in a decade for [CONVEY'24](#) on July 23-25!

View the full program of sessions and speakers and register at conveyconference.com to join grain, feed and processing industry peers in Omaha, Neb. CONVEY'24 will explore the intersection of safety and new technology. Both safety professionals and operations personnel will benefit from attending.

Over two days, attendees will engage in sessions on energy efficiency best practices; technology and modernization in the grain industry; grain grading technology improvement; how to utilize new equipment at an older facility; and employee onboarding and training.



View the program and [register here](#).

CEC 2024 registration and sponsor opportunities open soon

NGFA's 53rd annual Country Elevator Conference and Trade Show (CEC) is Dec. 10-12 in Kansas City, Mo.

NGFA's flagship meeting for grain merchants, elevator operators, feed manufacturers, processors, and grain industry suppliers attracts several hundred industry members each year for networking, education and the supplier trade show. Programming at CEC is designed to prepare, teach and inspire attendees.

Important dates and member opportunities for CEC 2024 include:

- **NGFA member exhibitor registration on Aug 1.**
- **Attendee registration opens on Sept. 10.**
- NGFA is accepting sponsors for CEC! More information will arrive in members' inboxes soon. Contact NGFA Vice President, Marketing and Member Services, [Rebecca Grubbs, for more information](#).

- Want to showcase your company's expertise? NGFA is holding an open call for speakers from NGFA-member companies to headline CEC breakouts and general sessions. More information will arrive in members' inboxes soon. Contact NGFA Vice President, Marketing and Member Services, [Rebecca Grubbs, for more information.](#)

NGFA's fifth annual Harvest Safety Week is Aug. 19-23

NGFA's fifth annual Harvest Safety Week is Aug. 19-23! Each year at the end of August, NGFA dedicates a week to sharing safety resources particularly relevant to the busy harvest season.

This year's theme encourages members to "Participate. Prepare. Protect." by participating in sharing Harvest Safety Week resources, preparing for hazards during the harvest season and protecting the employees that "transform America's harvest" into food, fuel and fiber. NGFA encourages its members to share NGFA harvest safety resources throughout the industry and with farmer customers.

Harvest Safety Week 2024 resources will include:



- New safety training videos on "Shuttle Loading and Rail Safety" and "Bin Site Entanglement Hazards." These videos are designed to be easily watched in a couple of minutes and are based on NGFA Safety Tips Sheets available on ngfa.org/safety.
- A live webinar with People Spark Consulting on employee onboarding on Aug. 20
- A recorded video presentation with M&M Specialty Services on grain quality management

Harvest Safety Week is made possible by NGFA and the National Grain and Feed Foundation. Thanks to the support of the Foundation, billboards and radio ads highlighting Harvest Safety Week 2024 will be displayed in several regions.

Members and non-members can sign up to receive NGFA's Harvest Safety Week emails [here](#). Those already receiving NGFA emails will also receive Harvest Safety Week materials.

SUPPLEMENTS

Register for next People Spark leadership training TODAY

The deadline to register for the August 2024 leadership program hosted by People Spark Consulting is July 19.

NGFA members receive a **bonus private coaching session** with their Leadership Transformation Program® registration. New cohorts begin monthly throughout 2024. [Click here for information!](#)

The investment for the 12-month People Spark Leadership Transformation Program® is \$2,500. Use reference code: NGFA

NGFA and People Spark Consulting have partnered to further the mission to provide education and training to members at all levels in the agriculture industry. The [People Spark Leadership Transformation Program®](#) is a year-long course that focuses on practical application of leadership skills

and tools. It starts with an 8-week intensive training, followed by 10 months of ongoing support to reinforce and sustain the learned skills.

NGFA Members: Communication preferences now available

NGFA members can log into their [member profiles](#) to select personal communication preferences for issues on which they would like to receive more timely and frequent information from the NGFA.

Directions: Log into your member profile using your company email at portal.ngfa.org. Select “Update Your Profile” and “Communication Preferences” to reveal the list of topics available in addition to the NGFA Newsletter and event/marketing updates. Additional topics include:

- Ag Policy
- Business and Operations
- Cybersecurity
- Feed and Food Safety
- Risk Management
- Safety and Health
- Sustainability
- Trade and Crop Technology
- Transportation and Logistics



Each new topic aligns directly with an NGFA committee (except cybersecurity). If you serve on an NGFA committee that aligns with one of these topics, you will receive these updates in addition to the information from the committee staff liaison and chair.

Learn more about each committee and member rosters at ngfa.org/committees.

Extra Supplements

Hagstrom Report: [In Milwaukee, Thompson, Boozman, Thune talk ag at RNC](#)

DTN: [GOP Congressional Aggies Talk About Farm Bill, Trade at RNC](#)

Feed & Grain: [USDA raises US feed grain supply forecast](#)

Agri-Pulse: [Senate Ag Republican: We'd be better off punting farm bill to next year](#) *(log in)*

World Grain: [Ag coops make Red Cross donations](#)

DTN: [Will They or Won't They? No Resolution for Possible Rail Strike in Canada](#)

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