



**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
Investigative Hearing**

Norfolk Southern Railway general merchandise freight train 32N  
derailment with subsequent hazardous material release and fires,  
in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>EXHIBIT</b>	
48	

Agency / Organization

**Norfolk Southern**

Title

## **Statement for the Record – Paul Williams**

**Paul Williams, Opening Statement**

*Panel 4: "Rail Tank Car Safety"*

Good afternoon. My name is Paul Williams, and I am Norfolk Southern's Regional Manager of Hazardous Materials for Virginia and West Virginia. I have been with Norfolk Southern since 2003. In those twenty years, I have worked to ensure the safe transport of hazardous material across our network, both in my role at Norfolk Southern and through my involvement with the AAR's Rail Tank Committee. Norfolk Southern has long advocated for more stringent tank car safety standards and a more aggressive phase-out for older equipment, like some of the tank cars that were involved in the East Palestine derailment.

Norfolk Southern, like a number of other railroad companies, is a common carrier, which means it has a legal obligation to transport goods upon reasonable request, including hazardous materials. This service is in the best interest of both the public and shippers; though running a railroad has inherent risks, rail remains the safest method of transporting hazardous materials above ground. We take our obligations extremely seriously and are continually focused on emphasizing safety while serving shippers and the public.

As an employee of Norfolk Southern for two decades, I want to make this clear: Norfolk Southern has always worked to do the right thing when we have an accident or spill. We will take care of the people of East Palestine. We will make sure we are the safety leader in the freight rail industry. Norfolk Southern has been enhancing our existing hot bearing detector network and piloting next-generation hot bearing detectors. We have committed to joining the Federal Railroad Administration's Confidential Close Call Reporting System, alongside the other Class I railroads. And we're not finished. We are also analyzing car routing, leveraging Positive

Train Control to minimize risks, and also self-reporting hazmat infractions to the FRA within 48 hours.

We are committed to learning from this accident and working with public officials and industry partners to improve railroad safety. All industry stakeholders, including railroad companies and railcar owners, manufacturers, leasing companies, and equipment makers, must work together to ensure the safety of our crews and the communities in which we operate and serve.

I would be happy at this time to answer any questions the Board may have.