

Date: March 15, 2024

To: Michael Hiller, Acting Director, Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations

Through: Sean Lynam, Chief, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Division

From: Bob Clatterbuck, Chief, Hazardous Materials Investigations Branch

Subject: Close Out of NTSB Investigation HMD23LR002 (Reed Point, MT)

SYNOPSIS

On June 24, 2023, about 6:14 AM local time, a Montana Rail Link (MRL) key train M-LAUMIS1-23A had 17 cars (No. 36-52) derail at a bridge (MP51.6), near Reed Point, Stillwater County, Montana. Sixteen of the seventeen derailed cars were loaded with hazardous materials, carrying sodium hydrosulfide, asphalt, and Molten Sulfur. Ten of the derailed cars fell into the Yellowstone River, nine of which were loaded with asphalt and molten sulfur that breached and released their contents into the river. Several water treatment plants temporarily stopped drawing water from the Yellowstone River, as a result. There was no evacuation, and no injuries reported. The bridge was destroyed.

INVESTIGATION

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) led the derailment investigation, focusing on the track and bridge failure, as well as the release of hazardous materials. The NTSB conducted a limited investigation to document the performance of the DOT-111 and AAR-211 tank cars involved in the derailment. A tank car damage assessment factual report was prepared and placed into the public docket, along with additional supporting documentation. The Safety Board investigation documented pertinent safety information that will be used in support of other rail investigations related to tank car performance.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this Safety Board investigation was met by documenting the damage to the DOT-111 and AAR-211 tank cars and making this documentation available to the public. Therefore, NTSB staff recommends that this investigation be closed.

I concur:

Michael Hiller
Acting Director
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations