

Buttigieg Makes No Mention of Cancer-Causing Chemical Release From Fiery Ohio Train Derailment



The continuing cleanup of portions of a Norfolk Southern freight train that derailed on Feb. 3 in East Palestine, Ohio. The image was taken on Feb. 9, 2023. (Gene J. Puskar/AP Photo)

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As reports of strange objects in the sky dominate the headlines, another potential danger in the air—vinyl chloride and other chemicals released following a Feb. 3 train [derailment](#) in East Palestine, [Ohio](#), near the Pennsylvania border—has received comparatively little publicity, including from some relevant federal authorities.

Transportation Secretary Pete [Buttigieg](#) didn't comment on the incident during a Feb. 13 morning [appearance](#) at the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Washington, though he did mention the safety risks of “balloons,” to laughter from the audience.

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) website [doesn't](#) have any press releases focused on the derailment yet. Neither does the [website](#) for the DOT's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

“While the FRA is also concurrently investigating the accident under our own authority, questions about the accident should be addressed to the NTSB [National Transportation Safety Board],” a spokesperson for the railroad administration told The Epoch Times in a Feb. 13 email.



Portions of a Norfolk Southern freight train that derailed on Feb. 3 in East Palestine, Ohio, are still on fire at midday, on Feb. 4, 2023. (Gene J. Puskar/AP Photo)

“Individuals drawing conclusions about causes and effects of the accident are speculative and should not be treated as fact until a final report is issued.”

The NTSB’s public relations Twitter account posted about the incident on Feb. 4, stating that a go-team from the safety board was heading to the scene.

“Team is expected to arrive today,” the NTSB wrote.

An email from the NTSB directed The Epoch Times to a Feb. 4 media briefing on the incident, available to watch on [YouTube](#).

“Additional information will be issued when available,” the NTSB email states.

Representatives for the secretary of transportation’s office didn’t respond by press time to a request by The Epoch Times for comment.

After the Feb. 3 derailment of 50 freight cars from a Norfolk Southern train, East Palestine Mayor Trent Conaway declared a “state of emergency” as black smoke billowed from the crash site.

The Times Leader reported that the incident marks the third train derailment in Ohio since October 2022.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro ordered on Feb. 6 the evacuation of a two-mile by one-mile zone spanning the state line.

A statement from DeWine cited the presence of vinyl chloride in five boxcars, announcing that the possibility of a devastating explosion would be mitigated through a controlled release later that day.

The statement said that residents who stayed near the controlled release risked “grave danger of death.”

After the vinyl chloride release, DeWine and other officials said on Feb. 8 that residents near the incident could return to their homes.



A black plume rises over East Palestine, Ohio, as a result of a controlled detonation of a portion of the derailed Norfolk Southern trains, on Feb. 6, 2023. (Gene J. Puskar/AP Photo)

Residents of nearby communities have reported that animals on their properties have been sickened or even died, raising concerns about the risk to livestock and humans.

Amanda Breshears of North Lima, Ohio, told ABC27 that video footage shows her chickens dying following the release.

“If it can do this to chickens in one night, imagine what it’s going to do to us in 20 years,” she said.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an updated report on the incident on Feb. 12.

“Air monitoring since the fire went out has not detected any levels of concern in the community that can be attributed to the incident at this time,” the EPA statement reads.

“Residents may still smell odors from the site. If you experience symptoms, Columbiana County Health Department recommends calling your medical provider.”

The statement also notes that the agency will work with local authorities “to eventually phase out community air monitoring.”

It also links to a document attributed to Norfolk Southern detailing the contents of the cars that derailed.

That document indicates that cars containing polyvinyl, another chemical, also burned.

“EPA cannot speak to the design or creation of this document,” the agency statement reads.

A spokesperson for the EPA directed The Epoch Times to the agency’s emergency resources website.

A reporter covering the incident was arrested on Feb. 9 while DeWine was providing an update on the incident, as reported by the Associated Press.

DeWine said he didn’t give the go-ahead to arrest that journalist, according to The Associated Press.

White House officials didn’t respond by press time to a request by The Epoch Times for comment.