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October 30, 2009

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE  
ALEXANDRIA, VA  
2009 NOV - 3 A 11: 53

Mr. James K. Hartmann  
City Manager  
City of Alexandria, VA  
310 King Street, Suite 3500  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3211

Dear Mr. Hartmann:

This refers to your letter of October 5, 2009, asking that Norfolk Southern Railway contact the Alexandria fire department via the 911 emergency call center even for non-emergency incidents. We have considered your renewed request and again decline to do so for the reasons set forth below.

For the record, the small ethanol spill that occurred on September 29 at the railroad's transloading facility was not required to be immediately reported to any agency, including the fire department, although the railroad, as company policy, does report spills (whether technically reportable or not) to federal and state agencies. Furthermore, the fire department had previously advised the railroad through its transloading contractor that the fire department did not want to be notified about small spills. Small spills are those that can be readily captured and cleaned up by on-scene personnel without the assistance of outsiders.

Because of your concern, Norfolk Southern, as a courtesy, did revise the emergency response and spill-control plan at its transloading facility so the fire department would be immediately notified of small spills that are not fully contained within a spill pan by having our contractor call the non-emergency number of (703) 838-4660. As previously specified in the plan, 911 will be called should an ethanol spill occur that creates an emergency situation posing a potential risk to public safety or health or when the amount of material spilled requires the assistance of outside emergency response forces, including the fire department. It remains our view that it is inappropriate to utilize the 911 number for non-emergency situations and that such use of the 911 number could be detrimental to public safety.

Sincerely,

William A. Galanko

WAG/dft