

Written by Kathy

Friday, 03 March 2023 18:57 - Last Updated Monday, 06 March 2023 14:31

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Staff article

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio-Following public criticism from Ohio's governor and visits by former president Donald Trump and environmental activist Erin Brockovich to the East Palenstine, Ohio town where on Feb 3 a Norfolk Southern train carrying toxic chemicals derailed, President Joe Biden said earlier this week that he too will visit the small village of some 4,700 working class residents in Northeast Ohio.

At issue is a train derailment that caused a toxic explosion and associated environmental problems that have upset residents and that has generated international news.

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“I’ve spoken with every official in Ohio, Democrat and Republican, on a continuous basis, as in Pennsylvania,” Biden told reporters after a Democratic luncheon on Capital Hill on Thursday. “I laid out a little bit in there what I think the answers are, and we put it together. And we will be implementing an awful lot to the legislation here.”

“And I will be out there at some point,” the president added.

But the president did not give a date of his upcoming visit to Ohio, once a pivotal state for presidential elections that is gradually turning red as Trump, a Republican, won Ohio over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in 2016 when he won the presidency and again in 2020 when he lost reelection to Biden. Republicans hold every statewide office in Ohio, including the offices of governor, secretary of state and state attorney general, all but three seats occupied by Democrats on the largely Republican majority female Ohio Supreme Court.

Biden's upcoming visit comes behind mounting criticism and what critics say is a less than aggressive approach to the environmental catastrophe. The president is also taking heat from Ohio Gov Mike DeWine, who has publicly said that the president should visit East Palestine.

## Following Trump's visit and criticism from Ohio's governor, President Biden says he will visit East Palestine

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Trump visited the train derailment site a week ago and was joined by East Palestine Mayor Trent Conaway, J.D. Vance, who is a U.S. senator from Ohio who won a hard fought campaign for his seat last November with the former president's support, Ohio state Sen. Michael Rulli and state Rep. Monica Robb Blasdel.

Speaking to a small group of local leaders, first responders and the media at the local fire station the former president and 2024 presidential contender told the residents that they were not forgotten and that he supports them.

"We're in East Palestine to show our love for our fellow Americans," he said.

He also took aim at President Biden for what he called an inept federal response to the disaster that has residents up in arms via fears of air intoxication that have caused evacuations.

"They were doing nothing for you," said Trump to local residents in referencing the Biden administration. "When they announced I was coming they changed their tune."

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EPA officials say that there is no public risk behind the East Palestine derailment and that rail transportation remains the most effective means to transport hazardous chemicals, though both Sen. Vance, and U.S. Sen Sherrod Brown, a Cleveland Democrat, have introduced bipartisan congressional legislation in response to the issue.

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We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As t

o the Obama interview,

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