BOOMER, W.Va. — A train hauling millions of pounds of crude oil that derailed on Monday was still burning Tuesday night as oil poured from the wreckage.

Residents relied on bottled water that was trucked into town after the utility West Virginia American Water, fearing that oil had been dumped into the Kanawha River, closed a treatment plant downstream, in Montgomery, on Monday. The company reopened the plant on Tuesday afternoon, saying tests had shown “nondetectable levels of the components of crude oil” in the river. Still, aerial photographs appeared to show oil in a nearby creek, and the utility advised its 2,000 customers in the area to boil water before using it.

The CSX train, with 109 tanker cars and two locomotives, derailed about 1:20 p.m. here in the southern part of the state, sending fireballs ripping through the air. The governor’s office released a statement Tuesday saying that 26 tankers had derailed and that “19 of those tankers were involved in the fire.”

Spills and fires in derailments have prompted concerns about the safety of transporting oil by rail. In 2011, the American Association of Railroads required that new tanker cars meet higher standards to resist rupture in accidents, though it did not require refitting older cars. CSX said the tankers in Monday’s crash had all been built to the new specifications.

Scattered fires still burned in pools of oil late Tuesday, the dark plume of smoke visible from many miles away, and a bitter aroma of burning plastic filled the air. Several tankers were charred an oily black, all their markings obscured.

In the derailment, several tanker cars jumped the tracks entirely, piling against each other at odd angles or tumbling down the riverbank. There were multiple explosions, as flames shot hundreds of feet in the sky. Residents, some of whom
were ordered to evacuate, said at least one house had burned to the ground in a few minutes, and firefighters from several surrounding departments fought the blaze in frigid conditions, with temperatures of 13 degrees or less.

“It was like a 500-pound bomb going off,” said Brandon Truman, 32, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who lives in this town, which is across the ice-clogged river from the crash site. “You could feel the pressure and the heat.”

He and his neighbors said the second blast had been the biggest, rattling their houses and their nerves. Residents noted the presence of chemical plants in the region and said their fear had initially been compounded by wondering what kinds of toxins might have been in the rail cars.

“We ran because we didn’t know what it was,” Mr. Truman said.

Leslie Bowles, who lives on the same short street, said, “It literally blew my door open.” Ms. Bowles said she had loaded her two small children into a car driven by her father-in-law and “just said, ‘Go.’ Just said, ‘Get out of here.’ ”

She and her husband, James, along with many of their neighbors, found their own vehicles stuck in the snow, and they fled on foot.

Cameron Sigmon, 12, said he and his sister had run down to the frozen road, without socks, carrying their dogs.

“Heck yeah, I was scared,” he said. “I thought I was going to die.”

About 200 to 300 people were ordered by the local authorities to evacuate on Monday. They took shelter in schools, a fire station and a community center, said Jennifer Sayre, the Kanawha County manager. “The railroad has made arrangements for some families to get hotel rooms,” she said.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin declared a state of emergency in Kanawha and Fayette Counties on Monday. CSX and local officials said that one person had been treated for possible respiratory trouble related to the accident but that they knew of no other injuries. It was not clear if any structures were damaged, but several hundred homes lost electricity.

The train was carrying oil from North Dakota to a ship terminal in Yorktown, Va.

Such accidents have become more common as oil shipment by rail has soared with the boom in oil production from the Bakken shale formation underlying parts of the northern Plains states and central Canada. Before 2009, fewer than 10,000 tank cars of oil were transported by rail each year in the United States, according to the
railroad association, but that traffic jumped to more than 230,000 cars in 2012, and more than 430,000 in 2013.

The federal Department of Transportation has proposed even tougher standards for tankers, and the Canadian authorities have required the retrofitting of older cars by 2017.

State, federal and CSX investigators were headed to the scene of the crash here to determine the cause and the extent of environmental damage.

It was not clear whether the unusually low temperatures or the snowstorm barreling through the region at the time had played a role in the accident.

Dan Heyman reported from Boomer, W. Va., and Richard Pérez-Peña from New York.

A version of this article appears in print on February 18, 2015, on page A10 of the New York edition with the headline: Spilled Oil Keeps Flames Burning After a Train Derailment in West Virginia.