



April 15, 2021

Submitted via email

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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, S.W., Room #1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
April 16, 2021
Part of
Public Record

Re: Fox Valley & Lake Superior Rail System, L.L.C. and Grand Elk Railroad, Inc.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Lines of Wisconsin Central Ltd. in the States of Wisconsin and Michigan. Finance Docket #36504.

Dear Chief Brown:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Paper Council, I ask you to strongly consider the expedited approval of the transaction between the Canadian National Railway (CN) and Watco regarding the sale of approximately 650 miles of branch lines in Wisconsin and Michigan (STB Finance Docket #36504). This transaction, if approved, would mean not only continued freight rail service for Wisconsin and Michigan's Northwoods, but it also presents an opportunity to expand service throughout these states.

As you may know, the Wisconsin Paper Council (WPC) is the premier trade association which advocates for our entire industry before regulatory bodies, state and federal legislatures, as well as helps to educate the general public and the media about the importance of paper, pulp and forestry production.

In July of 2020, the CN announced their intent to sell 650 miles of branch lines in Wisconsin and Michigan and 250 miles in Ontario, Canada. After a rigorous and thorough process of soliciting bids from prospective short lines railroads, on March 30, 2021, the CN made the exciting announcement that it had in fact decided to sell its assets of these aforementioned branch lines to Watco - a leading service and logistics company providing transportation, mechanical, material handling and warehousing, and supply chain service solutions for Customers throughout North America and Australia. Watco currently operates the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad, L.L.C. in the state of Wisconsin and also operates the Grand Elk Railroad in the state of Michigan.



Wisconsin Paper Council Letter to Chairperson Oberman

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Access to reliable rail service is critically important to the viability of our agriculture, timber and manufacturing sectors in the states of Wisconsin and Michigan. Having a company like Watco operating these important branch line segments is a great move towards the future of rail transportation in these regions.

Thank you for your consideration and again on behalf of the Wisconsin Paper Council, I ask for your strong consideration of an expedited approval of this transaction under Finance Docket #36504.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Suder".

Scott Suder
President
Wisconsin Paper Council

CC: WPC Board of Directors
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
All Parties of Record