

United States Senate

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Hon. Ann D. Begeman
Acting Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW.
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Acting Chairman Begeman:

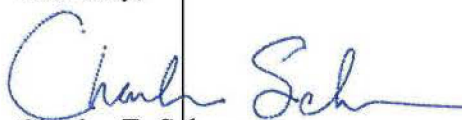
I write to express significant concerns with the recent actions taken by the Saratoga and North Creek Railway. In 2011, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) authorized the Saratoga and North Creek Railway, LLC to resume service to the Tahawus Line (STB Docket No. FD 35631); however rather than resume service as promised, recent reports indicate that the Saratoga and North Creek Railway plans to use the line to store obsolete oil tank cars. This is the second time in two years, the Saratoga and North Creek Railway has attempted to store obsolete oil tank cars on the line, rather than running continued operations in the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park is a uniquely valuable and vulnerable natural resource, and is protected by the New York State Constitution as "forever wild," and is just about the worst place one can imagine for a junk yard of old railcars.

Contrary to the representations the railroad made in 2011 and 2012 when the railway sought this Board's authority to operate, Saratoga and North Creek Railway has not instituted service to the Tahawus Mine. The business development and job creation that the railroad projected have not come to pass. Although I, along with several surrounding communities, supported the railroad's request to institute operations on the basis of the promise of legitimate rail freight service, the activities the railroad now seeks to pursue are antithetical to active railroad operations and pose a serious environmental hazard. In short, you can't run freight service with thousands of rusty cars sitting on the line, and even if you could, storing old oil cars in the Adirondack Park is an unacceptable action.

Although Saratoga and North Creek Railway has promised to remove the sixty or so cars it has stored in the Park since earlier this past fall, it has also threatened to resume storage and to bring in up to 2,000 obsolete rail cars which it plans to park for years. This is unacceptable and the STB must use every power and authority it has to prevent the Saratoga and North Creek Railway from taking such an action. Legitimate freight rail operations are an important part of our economy, but using an old rail line in the middle of a State Park to store outdated tanker cars is unacceptable outcome and must be prohibited.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator