TAMMY BALDWIN
WISCONSIN

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 6, 2016

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
United States Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Elliott:

I write to bring your attention to the Canadian National (CN) rail line from Mellen to Ashland, Wisconsin. Severe storms and flooding on July 11 and 12, 2016 caused widespread damage throughout northern Wisconsin—including damage to the rail line. CN subsequently closed the track. An embargo of the line has been in place since July 13, 2016.

In the months since the storm, communities throughout northern Wisconsin continue to rebuild and plan for the future. I remain committed to ensuring local businesses are able to transport products and drive our local economy forward as part of the recovery process. Therefore, I ask for your help in ensuring shippers have access to reliable and affordable rail service.

The rail line to Ashland remains active under the embargo. I ask that you ensure CN continues to meet its common carrier obligation to provide transportation and service upon reasonable request. Additionally, should CN seek approval from the Surface Transportation Board to discontinue operations or abandon the line, I ask that you uphold the best interest of shippers and the local economy. Indeed, current statute requires the Board to consider whether discontinuance will have a serious, adverse impact on rural and community development when the Board reviews a discontinuance request.

The Ashland area has experienced steady economic growth in recent years. However, I am concerned disrupted rail shipping will cause hardship for current shippers and dampen efforts to attract and retain businesses in Ashland.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator