

U.S. Reps. Tiffany, Bergma: Hopeful About Prospects for Improved Rail Service

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WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Tom Tiffany (WI-07) and Rep. Jack Bergman (MI-01) today expressed appreciation for freight rail carrier Canadian National (CN) after the company announced a partnership with WATCO that the companies say will improve access to rail service in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

CN on Wednesday announced an agreement “for the sale of non-core lines and assets on the Soo subdivision (approximately 250 miles of track) that runs from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to Oba, Ontario and approximately 650 miles of branch lines of Wisconsin Central Ltd. in Wisconsin and Michigan. This marks the successful conclusion of the sale process that CN announced and launched in July of 2020.”

“Access to reliable rail service is a critically important to the viability of our agriculture, timber and manufacturing sectors,” said Tiffany. “Northern Wisconsin is poised for growth, and stable, affordable and dependable rail service a key component for reaching that potential.”

It’s good that CN followed through on their commitment to spin off old the Wisconsin Central lines and I hope we can work together to ensure a brighter future for the region,” Tiffany added.

“Economic prosperity for many industries, manufacturers, and working families in

the Upper Peninsula is tied to rail connectivity,” said Bergman. “While I will continue to remain watchful, I’m optimistic that today’s announcement will safeguard future commerce and access across the U.P. and throughout the region.”

Owing to service reductions in recent years, businesses throughout the region face limited shipping options and must rely more heavily on trucking to transport goods as a result. While the trucking industry plays a critically important role in regional and international commerce, the economics are often not as favorable or desirable as those associated with freight rail options.

“This is a great opportunity, but the devil is in details,” concluded Tiffany. “I look forward to working with CN and WATCO, the Surface Transportation Board, industry leaders and other stakeholders to ensure that this agreement results in better service, lower rates, and a long-term commitment to the region.”