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Wisconsin Central Group
An ad hoc Rail Freight Stakeholders Coalition

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Great Lakes Forests Log Car Fleet
Concept Outline

The future health of the Great Lakes Forest and welfare of communities dependent on its resources requires dramatically increasing the harvest (currently less the 50%) of growth under sustainable forestry practices. Each tree of each species and each bolt from each tree must achieve it highest and best use and value. For that to occur, a sustainable rail transportation system is essential.

Great Lakes Forest Log Car Fleet Concept.

• Restore the rail-based system for transporting raw forest products, optimizing roles of rail and truck, minimizing reliance on over-the-road ("OTR") trucking.

• Create full supply chain visibility for loggers, log truckers, railroads and mills.

• Establish an integrated log car fleet – the necessary first step - to satisfy increasing demand and provide virtual single line service throughout the region.

• Support ongoing fleet management, maintenance and replacement through user fees, equitably allocated.

Private Sector Investment Constrained by Competition.

• Within railroads, competition for capital – with many high return opportunities from which to choose – is and will remain at all time record highs.

• Logs are at a disadvantage in this competition for private capital.

• Benefits of rail transport of logs flow disproportionately to the public – *i.e.,* do not show up on the bottom lines of private sector shippers and rail carriers.

Public Sector Benefits Alone More Than Support the Investment.

• Converting to rail hundreds of thousands of OTR log truck trips to the mills and mostly empty returns will:

  ◦ Reduce highway and bridge maintenance, affording the opportunity to return part of the savings to support routes moving logs to rail;

  ◦ Reduce conflicts with local and tourist traffic and improve highway safety generally; and

  ◦ Provide advance supply chain permitting more effective allocation of highway funds to routes for log and other freight moving in the region.

• Better access to highest and best uses will increase the resource value and return to landowners – *e.g.,* county forests that support schools and other public needs.

• Increasing the harvest will reduce risk., cost and resource loss to forest fires, disease and death in the forest releasing sequestered carbon.