

## Wisconsin Central Group



An ad hoc Rail Freight Stakeholders Coalition

[www.centralcorridors.com/wcg/](http://www.centralcorridors.com/wcg/)

John Duncan Varda, Counsel  
DeWitt Ross & Stevens s.c.  
2 E. Mifflin Street, Ste. 600  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-212-1103  
[jdvarda@dewittross.com](mailto:jdvarda@dewittross.com)

April 4, 2013

**2013 Senate Bill 31 – Local Freight Bridge Program**  
**Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, Veterans and Military Affairs**  
Hearing, Thursday, April 4, 2013, 425 South, State Capitol

### For Information

Wisconsin Central Group is an ad hoc coalition of rail freight shippers dedicated to improving the competitiveness of Wisconsin manufacturers and other shippers and receivers of freight, working collaboratively with Wisconsin railroads and truckers, to shift freight from highway to rail and rail intermodal.

We appear, today, for information, to draw attention to the fact that SB-31 is as much a rail bill as a truck bill.

As of this last July, 2012, WisDOT is able to issue annual permits for “overweight” sealed containers moving in international commerce. 2011 Act 54. These permits can be a key competitive enhancement for increasing Wisconsin exports via rail intermodal terminals such as the one opened by Canadian National at Chippewa Falls in late 2011 and new terminals we and others are working to establish at other Wisconsin locations (*e.g.*, Green Bay). We expect to propose action by Federal Highway Administration, subject to state opt-in, to extend international weights to sealed containers moving in domestic commerce moving to and from intermodal rail connections and ports.

We believe the productivity added by these additional payload weights will promote competitiveness of Wisconsin manufacture and jobs and, at the same time, shift domestic freight from highway to intermodal rail. This shift will produce less pavement and bridge wear overall, an infrastructure dividend to the public.

SB-31 will provide a program to help focus funding for local bridges on routes over which increasing volumes of freight will move to and from intermodal rail and transload terminals for Wisconsin manufactured goods, agriculture and forest products.

**Under the auspices of: Wisconsin Paper Council, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, and Michigan Forest Products Council**