Wisconsin Central Group
An ad hoc Rail Freight Stakeholders Coalition
www.centralcorridors.com/wcg/

Lake States Shippers Association
A Classic Co-op Shippers Association
www.centralcorridors.com/lssa/

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To: Dale Kupczyk, Vice-Chair
Stacey Johnson, Acting Chair
NRTC Executive Committee

Re: **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission**
Campaign 2019-2020 – Some Action Options To Consider

Thank you for generously permitting our participation in the Commission's meeting at Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association, Rhinelander, on Friday, October 26, 2018 and the opportunity to share our suggestions and WCGroup/LSSA's consideration of a "Campaign 2019-2020" to re-connect the Great Lakes Forests Region ("GLFR") rail network.

May we offer suggestions to answer the question: What can we do? We look forward to NRTC's consideration and guidance to plan and implement such a comprehensive campaign and the projects necessary to carry it out. Below are ten topics to consider. This list is not exhaustive.

Some Likely Target Projects for a Northwoods RR Network Infrastructure Campaign?

1. Create a dedicated railcar fleet for the GLFR rail network?
   a. Public "ownership" for federal funding, association or third-party management, originating and/or terminating freight in the GLFR?
   b. Pool existing private and RR-owned log cars, boxcars and related rail equipment?
   c. Provide software and organizational support, as needed, to optimize asset utilization?
   d. Promote a new car assembly and rebuilding industry within the GLFR? Extend lives of aging log car and boxcar fleets?

2. Restore the Hwy 8 Rail Corridor?
   a. Restore out-of-service segments between Ladysmith (Tony) and Prentice and between Rhinelander and Goodman to re-integrate GLFR wood fiber markets via rail and provide less circuitous routes and minimize contacts with congested rail corridors and terminals?
   b. Engage CN operations, business development, service and design teams? Or, seek an alternative operator?

3. Restore out-of-service branch line facilities and rail service?

4. Rail access sites and facilities?
   a. From simple flex log landings to multipurpose transfer facilities?
   b. Site location and on-site development planning?
   c. Log landings, transload, potential start-up local intermodal connections?
   d. Public and private access? Deploy virtual security monitoring, access management?
   e. Package insurance and indemnification model options, liability limitations?

Among Components to Sustain a Northwoods RR Network Infrastructure Campaign?

5. Articulate, in coordination with freight shipper stakeholders, an overall Northwoods regional, and related local, strategies for competitive rail access, *e.g.*, "Campaign 2019-2020"?
   a. Find "seed" money for planning, further grant funding and expanding NRTC's administration and communications support structure?
   b. Support providing feedback to, and input from, NRTC County and other members, other stakeholders, GLFR media, state and Congressional officials?
   c. Communicate with, invite feedback from, public and private sector transportation, forestry, agriculture, recreational and tourism stakeholders?

6. Renew efforts to expand NRTC and/or NRTC coordinated activity to the entire GLFR?
   a. Reach out to WI and Upper MI counties not yet participating?
   b. Reach out to northern MN counties and/or rail-oriented organizations such as Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council or Iron Range Regional Rail Initiative?

7. Create a coordinated "ask" for more state funding and flexibility funding GLFR rail projects?
   a. A consistent, coordinated approach for MI, MN and WI – GLFR rail is a "system"?
   b. Seek to mobilize lobbying commitments by public and private sector organizations whose members are GLFR stakeholders?

8. GLFR development professionals – establish a network?
   a. Develop/provide talking points, updates, for consistent advice about GLFR rail access? Compete for local projects by selling the GLFR's rail access commitment?
   b. Engage development professionals in establishing truckload shipper contacts and promoting participation in "NRTC Line Committees"?

9. NRTC Line Committees?
   a. Virtual and/or hands-on in-person as circumstances warrant?
   b. Engage local rail and over-the-road truckload shippers/receivers?
   c. Coordinate with NRTC's overall strategy and shape local strategies increase local origin/destination rail freight and/or grant funding for public investment in the rail line and/or related rail access facilities?
   d. For operating rail lines, target freight to add to existing switching and train operations (*i.e.*, target first freight which will use under-utilized capacity, increasing RR revenues without or minimally increasing RR costs)?

10. Promote active engagement by, and collaboration with, the GLFR railroads? For example:
    a. Invite CN to present its "Railroading 101" series to NRTC officials and others, including specific examples of how CN operates across the region?
    b. Persuade the GLFR RRs to share their operations/planning criteria and benchmarks?
    c. Request CN engage its operations, business development and service design teams, as appropriate, to support soliciting OTR truck conversions to rails, siting and development of rail access facilities and optimizing operations to providing competitive and sustainable service to an expanding freight base?