



*Town of Minerva*

PRESS RELEASE

October 19, 2017

## **First Oil Tankers have Arrived in the Adirondack Park, Stored on Track in the Forest Preserve**

***28 Oil Tanker rail cars were transported through Saratoga and Warren counties on October 17<sup>th</sup> and are stored on rail line along the Boreas River in the Town of Minerva in Essex County***

***Local government and environmental leaders call upon the Cuomo Administration and State Agencies to stop this plan***

### **For more information:**

Peter Bauer, Executive Director: Office 518.685.3088, Cell 518.796.0112  
Stephen McNally, Supervisor, Town of Minerva, Office 518.251.2869, Cell 518.538.3597

**Minerva, NY** – On October 17<sup>th</sup> the first use oil tankers were transported through Saratoga and Warren counties by the Saratoga and North Creek Railway, part of Iowa Pacific Holdings, to a section of siding track along the banks of the Boreas River in the Town of Minerva, Essex County. 28 used oil tankers cars were lined on track north of the North Woods Club Road on rail line traversing the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area of the Forest Preserve. Each tanker car is roughly 58 feet in length and the 28 cars lined nearly one-third of a mile of rail track.

At a meeting with the Warren County Board of Supervisors on Friday October 13<sup>th</sup>, Iowa Pacific CEO Ed Ellis stated that his railroad had the space to store 20,000 rail cars along the Sanford Lake Railway in Hamilton and Essex counties, which adjoins the Saratoga to North Creek rail line north of North Creek. Saratoga and North Creek Railway leases rail lines from Warren County and the Town of Corinth and owns the Sanford Lake Rail Line in Hamilton and Essex counties. The shipment of 28 used out-of-service oil tanker rail cars could be the first of many. Iowa Pacific Holdings has stated that these rail cars would be stored indefinitely.

Local government and environmental leaders have called on Governor Cuomo and the Department of Environmental Conservation and Adirondack Park Agency to stop this unwise plan.

“We must stop the trashing of the Adirondacks with old out-of-service rail cars. Where is Governor Cuomo? Where is the Department of Environmental Conservation? Where is the Adirondack Park Agency? This is a major moment in the history of the Adirondack Park and the forever wild Forest Preserve, yet state leaders are AWOL. This runs counter to everything that the Adirondack Park is all about and must be stopped,” said Peter Bauer, executive director of Protect the Adirondacks.

“I am very disappointed with the rail car storage on the Sanford Lake line. The people of Minerva are very proud of their community and work diligently to preserve our history as well as to maintain our properties. I am very concerned not only of the environmental factors of having these cars sitting in the middle of the Adirondack park but also the issue if the trains are on the track the potential of having aggregate from Tahawus shipped to market is mute. These cars also will be stored on a dead end line accessible only thru North Creek and most importantly over an aging train trussel over the Hudson river. There are many groups and individuals who work tirelessly to keep the Adirondack Park as the jewel that it is, but I cannot see how storing these cars goes along with this vision,” said Stephen McNally, Supervisor of the Town of Minerva.

Legal work continues to investigate the legality of storing used oil tanker cars on the Sanford Lake Railway. This railway was created during World War II, when the federal government condemned an easement to build the rail line using eminent domain under emergency powers, for the express purpose of transporting titanium from the Tahawus Mine. Iowa Pacific Holdings now owns this easement, which reverts to the state on Forest Preserve lands and private landowners on private lands, once the rail line ceases to operate. The change in use from transport to storage of rail cars raises serious legal issues due to the history of how this rail line was created. Other legal issues involve APA permit jurisdiction for new commercial uses and regulations under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act as well as issues under DEC jurisdiction involving both the Rivers Act and the Forest Preserve management. Legal reviews are also being conducted of regulations under the Surface Transportation Board and Federal Railroad Administration.

“There are many questions around this highly controversial activity. We need answers from state and local leaders,” said Peter Bauer.

See pictures of the stored tanker cars attached (credit: Protect the Adirondacks)

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