



PRESS RELEASE

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PROTECT Cheers State Action to Stop Storage of Used Oil Tanker Railcars in the Adirondack Park

State submits petition to federal Surface Transportation Board to end use of Sanford Lake Rail Line by Iowa Pacific Holdings, citing companies failures to live up to 2012 agreements that reopened the rail line

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Protect the Adirondacks applauds Governor Andrew Cuomo and Basil Segos, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), for their submission of a petition to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) arguing against continued use by Iowa Pacific Holdings of the 30-mile Sanford Lake Railway, which runs from North Creek to the Tahawus Mine in Newcomb, for rail operations and storage of oil tanker railcars. The state is requesting immediate action.

The petition was prepared by the DEC with input from other state agencies. It was signed by the DEC Counsel. The petition makes the argument that the rail line must be abandoned due to the unique history of the Adirondack Park, sections that pass through the Forest Preserve and Article XIV protections under the State Constitution, and the state's long history of conservation and environmental protection in the Adirondacks. The petition argues that the particular history of the "Tahawus Branch" (Sanford Lake Railroad) precludes storage of railcars. The creation of that railroad was specifically for hauling minerals from the mine. The state says that has not happened and that storage of railcars violates the conditions that allowed Iowa Pacific to operate the rail line.

"Iowa Pacific is in the process of creating a 30-mile junkyard through the central Adirondacks, including through vast stretches of the public Forest Preserve," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

"Protect the Adirondack congratulates Governor Cuomo and state agencies for their defense of the Forest Preserve and Adirondack Park and will do all that we can to support the petition before the Surface Transportation Board," said Peter Bauer.

The state cites opposition of local governments to support its petition. In the petition the state formally rescinded its support in 2010-2012 for reopening the Sanford Lake line since it argues that Iowa Pacific has failed to use the rail line for hauling minerals from the mine and allowing a

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seasonal snowmobile trail. The state ends the petition with a series of motions seeking to compel a favorable decision from the STB.

The [state also sent a letter](#) to Iowa Pacific. In it the state informs the company of its petition with the STB, putting the company "on notice" of its plans to file an application with the STB seeking "adverse abandonment" of the Sanford Lake line.

Public opposition to this plan was fierce. Resolutions of opposition were passed by Essex and Warren Counties. Storage of oil tankers was widely opposed by environmental groups and the general public.

To date, local government leaders in the Towns of Minerva and Newcomb in Essex County have opposed the plans of Iowa Pacific. The opposition of these towns was supported by the Essex County Board of Supervisors. The Warren County Board of Supervisors supported the Essex County resolution.

Iowa Pacific Holdings owns and operates the Saratoga & North Creek Railway, which runs a tourist train, on tracks in the Warren County and Saratoga County, which it leases from Warren County and the Town of Corinth. This section of track is approximately 40 miles and runs from Saratoga to North Creek. Under the terms of its leases no railcars can be stored on the rail lines in Warren and Saratoga counties, but the company claims it can transport out-of-service rail cars through these counties to the Sanford Lake Railway, which begins in North Creek and runs 30 miles through the north end of Warren County, into Hamilton County and Essex County. Iowa Pacific has brought nearly 100 out-of-service rail cars to the Adirondacks so far.

Protect the Adirondack produced a video in opposition to this plan. Here is the video link on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/G62mAnanaKY>

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission to protect the Adirondack Park and defend the public "forever wild" Forest Preserve through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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