Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 6, 2015

Secretary Cathy Stepp
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster Street
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Secretary Stepp,

We write to request that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources require BNSF Railway to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prior to their planned track expansion through the City of La Crosse and along the La Crosse River Marsh. The purpose of an EIS is to examine the environmental consequences of a proposed project so that officials and the public can make informed decisions and help reduce any possible negative impacts.

Per Wisconsin's Administrative Code (NR 150.20), there are several reasons why a project may qualify for an EIS, including if it may have damaging results on especially important, critical, or sensitive environmental resources or if it involves broad public controversy, both of which are applicable in this case. We urge you to require an EIS to determine whether water quality, vegetation, wildlife, and navigation of the La Crosse River Marsh and Mississippi River area will be affected by the planned railway expansion.

The preservation and protection of the La Crosse River Marsh and the Mississippi River are vital to sustaining a strong economy, a high quality of life for communities along the river, and maintenance of a watershed rich with biodiversity. It is critical that all potential environmental impacts of this project are fully understood before a decision is made. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator

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