

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2014

COMMITTEES:  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

BUDGET

SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON AGING

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Joseph C. Szabo  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Szabo:

On a recent trip to La Crosse, Wisconsin I met with a group of citizens concerned about the deteriorating condition of several railroad bridges in the region. I write to you today to urge you to send bridge safety specialists to inspect these bridges as quickly as possible. I also request any documentation the Federal Railroad Administration has on the most recent inspection of these bridges through its bridge management program audits.

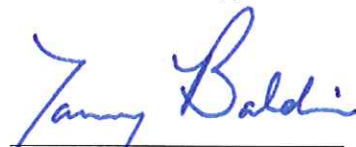
The attached photos are of bridges on the BNSF rail line running between La Crosse and Genoa. As you can see, several of the bridges have cracks and deteriorating bridge columns. One bridge's concrete columns appear to have been replaced by wooden supports as temporary repair measures.

These photos are especially troubling given recent reports that indicate 70 trains a day pass over these bridges, and as much as 40 trains in a given week are carrying crude oil. Many of the bridges in question are in environmentally sensitive areas such as the La Crosse River Marsh and the Coon Creek watershed. An oil train derailment in these areas would be ecologically and economically devastating to the community.

The dramatic increase in train traffic has surely increased the structural demands on the rail networks' bridge infrastructure. I appreciate all that your agency can do to ensure that railroads are making the appropriate investments in maintenance and repair on their rail lines.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. Please keep my staff and me apprised of your efforts to rectify this situation as quickly as possible. For questions or concerns please contact Brian Conlan on my staff at 202-224-5653 or [Brian\\_Conlan@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:Brian_Conlan@baldwin.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Senator Tammy Baldwin