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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRODUCER CAR LOADING SITES SHOULD BE RETAINED, SAYS NFU

CN Rail should not be allowed to delist 52 producer car loading sites in western Canada, says the Vice-President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

In a letter to federal Transport Minister John Baird, NFU Vice-President Terry Boehm, who farms near Allan, Saskatchewan, says CN's bid to abandon service to 52 producer car loading sites is unacceptable. CN announced in early July its intent to delist 24 sites in Saskatchewan, 19 in Alberta, and 9 in Manitoba. The 60-day comment period regarding delisting expires on September 6, 2009.

In his letter to Minister Baird, Boehm states that producer cars are important to farmers for many reasons. Farmers are able to save between \$1000 and \$2000 in handling and elevation charges on each producer car, which represents a substantial amount of money, not only for individual producers, but for rural communities as well.

"The NFU is greatly concerned about the loss of these producer car loading sites, and we believe it is our duty to speak out loud and clear against these closures," stated Boehm. "If CN is allowed to delist these points, it will deprive a large number of producers of affordable access to the system of getting their grain to market. The producer car loading sites give all farmers an additional avenue to ship their grain. This is especially important at a time when there is increasing consolidation within the industry."

Boehm pointed out producer car loading sites do not cost the railways anything, since they do not have to actively maintain them. "These sites are also widely-scattered, which means farmers do not have to haul grain long distances – thereby saving them both time and money," he stated. "The end result of delisting these sites is that the railways would no longer be obliged to provide service directly to the farmers, and the line elevator companies would get more business."

Boehm concluded the NFU has always supported the historic right of farmers to load their own producer cars, and he urged the Minister to block the delisting of the 52 producer car sites, and also to implement changes to the Canadian Transportation Act which would allow a fair mechanism for farmers to have meaningful input into decisions regarding delisting of producer car loading sites.

The 52 producer car loading sites include:

Manitoba:

Sprague, Elie, Plumas, Roblin, Makaroff, Oakner, St. Lazare, Brandon, and Minitonas.

Saskatchewan:

Kelso, Langbank, Odessa, Vibank, Atwater, Allan, Dundurn, Bladworth, Yorkton, Sturgis, Buchanan, Invermay, Wadena, Quill Lake, Tisdale, Harris, Brock, Kindersley, Flaxcombe, Alsask, Leney, Biggar, Scott, and Lashburn.

Alberta:

Beiseker, Bircham, Burbank, Duhamel, Hotchkiss, Chauvin, Ryley, Claysmore, Mundare, Spirit River, Lamont, Beamer, Egremont, Entwistle, Hythe, Kinuso, Donnelley, Girouxville, and Peace River.

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