



STATEMENT CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF THE ADIRONDACK SCENIC RAILROAD

July 2, 2013

The Rail Users' Network, (RUN) strongly believes that the Adirondack Scenic Railroad should be a vital part of New York State's public transportation in the future, and calls for its preservation.

The Adirondack Scenic Railroad can and should be a significant travel corridor for tourism in New York State, which would also bring added benefits to businesses in the area served by the railroad. In addition, RUN calls for the portion of the route between Big Moose and Saranac Lake, which is currently not in condition to support passenger services, to be upgraded to a state of good repair, sufficient to support through passenger service between Utica and Lake Placid. Such service would re-establish Lake Placid as a destination accessible from any point on the Amtrak system, as it was until 1965 under the New York Central Railroad, and again during the 1980 Winter Olympics and for a short time thereafter.

We note the success of the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad, operating between those two named points, under the ownership of Ed Ellis. The S&NC connects with Amtrak's Adirondack train at Saratoga Springs, allowing transfer between North Creek and intermediate stations, with trains elsewhere on Amtrak. Political and business leaders in North Creek have said that the service has brought economic benefits to the town, and RUN believes that restoration of through service on the Adirondack Scenic will bring similar benefits to Lake Placid and intermediate stops north of Utica. We also note that Ed Ellis has investigated running through service between New York and Lake Placid, which could be established through a public-private partnership, once the track is upgraded to reasonable condition to support such a service. A morning departure from Lake Placid could be coordinated with the Empire Service schedule on Amtrak to allow connections at Utica, which would allow passengers to travel between New York City and intermediate stations to Lake Placid during a single day. A night train could also be operated, allowing connections from both New York and Chicago.

Shutting down the railroad might benefit a few snowmobile users, but most snowmobile users will not suffer considerable inconvenience if the rail line is upgraded and operated for passenger service. The environmental benefits of passenger trains are well-known, as are the benefits to businesses in communities that are served by rail. The people of New York City, the Empire Corridor, and other parts of the State will also benefit by having access to the stations along the railroad. RUN recognizes the benefits that would come from restoring and operating the entire length of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, from Utica to Lake Placid, and we call for all State agencies involved in a decision-making capacity to implement that policy. Upgrading the Adirondack Scenic will be a good investment for all New Yorkers.

This statement was authorized at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rail Users' Network, Inc. on June 15, 2013 in New York City. RUN is a not-for-profit corporation. Its members are rail and transit users, as well as advocates for better rail service nationwide. RUN's mission is the expansion and improvement of the rail and rail transit network in the United States and Canada, so the public can enjoy enhanced opportunities to travel by train. Our members represent many states, including New York, which is the home state of two members of our Board of Directors.

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