



**Amy McBeth**  
Director, Public Affairs

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April 8, 2020

Jerry Deschane  
League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
131 W Wilson Street, Suite 505  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Deschane:

BNSF Railway thanks you for your leadership and partnership as we all face the unprecedented threat presented by COVID-19. We will continue doing our part as we safely and efficiently move the commodities that feed, fuel, build, and sustain the communities we serve across the western two-thirds of our nation.

The goods our railroad moves include the vital supplies needed to mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus and everyday goods we all use. These products include medical supplies, agriculture and food products, consumer goods of all types, chemicals necessary to create cleaning products like bleach and to treat local and regional water supplies, and paper products for diapers, paper towels and toilet paper.

Acknowledging the essential role of the nation's railroads, the Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued guidance on critical infrastructure workers (<https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>) to include the railroad industry and its employees. Similarly, many state and local governments have designated our industry and employees as essential as they issue orders to address the pandemic.

At BNSF, safety will always be at the heart of everything we do and each decision we make. We take seriously our obligation to provide a safe workplace for our employees and to protect the health and welfare of the communities we serve. We have taken decisive action to implement COVID-19 policies that follow CDC guidelines. Additionally, we have created detailed employee guidance on workplace behavior and implemented strict response protocols should an employee exhibit symptoms or come into contact with someone who is symptomatic or tests positive.

BNSF Railway greatly appreciates your continued recognition of the importance of our function, and we offer the following railroad specific considerations as you continue to protect the health and safety of residents and the economy:

1. **Travel Quarantine/Shelter in Place:** *Railroad employees and railroad contractors and suppliers need to be able to go to work to perform critical functions, and often cross state lines when performing daily work activities.*
2. **Lodging/Food Service:** *Freight train crews must be able to access hotel rooms and are often served meals by third party providers.*
3. **Priority Testing:** *Railroad employees, as operators of critical infrastructure, should be given priority to receive testing for COVID-19. The CDC has recognized symptomatic critical infrastructure employees as priority 3. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>)*
4. **Construction Projects:** *Some localities are halting construction projects; railroads and rail contractors must be able to repair track as needed.*
5. **Right of Access:** *Railroad employees and railroad contractors should not be impeded as they are performing critical duties.*

Thank you for your attention to our comments and for all of the work that you are doing to protect the public. Please do not hesitate to contact me for assistance or for more information about the abovementioned considerations. We all truly are in this together.

Sincerely,

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