

California State Senate

SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



May 14, 2021

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of the Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: North Coast Railroad Authority – Abandonment Exemption – in Mendocino, Trinity and Humboldt Counties, CA, AB 1305X.

Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for all the work you are doing on behalf of us here on the North Coast of California. I strongly support the filing cited above. Preserving the NCRA railroad right-of-way through railbanking will ensure the continued public benefit of this invaluable transportation corridor while protecting the possibility of future freight rail. Railbanking is overwhelmingly popular in the counties it runs through, and there is strong support from the state and local communities for creating interim trail use.

I support NCRA's request for a Notice of Exemption for its rail line from MP 139.5 near or at Commercial Street in Willits all the way to Samoa at MP 300.5, Korbelt at MP 301.8 and inclusive of the Carlotta Branch to MP 267.72, and NCRA's request for a Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) for all of these properties.

Due to ground movement and other geological factors, the Eel River Canyon is simply not suitable for reliable and competitive rail use. The FRA embargoed the line in 1998, and no train has run on it since then, and the line has severely deteriorated since that time. On the other hand, conversion of the line into a trail (in particular, a component of the state's The Great Redwood Trail) will preserve it for the future, facilitate local recreation and tourism, and protect and foster a variety of conservation and environmental values. We request STB to issue an effective NITU for this line as soon as possible.

Please add my office to the service list as parties in this proceeding. Please note that our email address is jason.liles@sen.ca.gov, and we consent to email service of pleadings. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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A copy is being served on counsel for North Coast Railroad Authority's attorney, as indicated below.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a small flourish.

MIKE MCGUIRE
Senator

cc: Charles H. Montange
Law Offices of Charles H. Montange
426 NW 162nd St.
Seattle, WA 98177
(by email to c.montange@frontier.com)
Attorney for NCRA