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Martin Oberman, Chair
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423



Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to ask full and fair consideration of the North Coast Railroad Authority's (NCRA) request to reconsider the abeyance the Surface Transportation Board recently placed on two decisions regarding railbanking of the rail line between Willits and Eureka in my congressional district. The NCRA's request that the STB lift the abeyance on the decision to rail bank the mainline railroad and consider jurisdiction over the Annie and Mary segment separately would allow important projects by Humboldt County and the City of Eureka to proceed.

There appears to be no argument that the STB has jurisdiction on whether the main line can be railbanked. At issue is whether the STB has authority to railbank the Annie and Mary segment, a small spur at the northern end of the longer line. In its June decision, however, the STB placed both requests in abeyance indefinitely.

Unfortunately, the delay in issuing the Federal Notice and ensuing environmental document on the mail line railbanking request puts two key projects in jeopardy. Humboldt County's Humboldt Bay Trail South project looks to raise the rail levee prism to protect it, U.S. Highway 101, and the trail from sea level rise. That project, and the City of Eureka's efforts to develop a waterfront trail, both require the removal of tracks and ties which requires railbanking.

It appears reasonable that the STB could proceed with its decision on railbanking the main rail line while taking additional time to review the jurisdictional issues on the Annie and Mary segment. I ask that you give the NCRA's request your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,


JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

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