

September 13, 2021

EI-31280

Comment on Railbanking the North Coast Rail Authority

Dear Surface Transportation Board Members,

I am writing to urge you to expeditiously complete the railbanking process for the Northwestern Pacific Rail Line. It seems fantastical that anyone would think the right of way through the Eel River Canyon could be rehabilitated to support the passage of coal bearing freight trains. Failure is inevitable and, whether financial or structural, will put sediment and possibly coal into the Eel River, critical habitat for endangered salmon runs and the source of drinking water for local communities. Repurposing this geologically unstable corridor for non motorized use as the Great Redwood Trail is an excellent use. It is not necessary to pause the whole railbanking process to confirm the legal status of two terminal segments. Please set a timeline so the rail line can begin its second life.

Sincerely,