



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

March 1, 2022

AB 33 Sub-No. 262  
AB 33 (Sub-No. 284X).

304053

Mr. Martin J. Oberman  
Surface Transportation Board Chairman  
395 E. Street SW  
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED  
Office of Proceedings  
March 2, 2022  
Part of  
Public Record

Dear Mr. Oberman,

I write in support of the Village of Hanna City's Motion for Issuance of Substitute Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) and Motion for Adjustment of the Substitute NITU Negotiation Period. Thus, I encourage the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to issue the substitute NITU and extend the NITU negotiation period, which expires on March 30, 2022.

The Village of Hanna City, Peoria County, and the City of Farmington have been actively trying to purchase the Union Pacific (UP) Elm Industrial Lead railbanked railroad since 2008 and convert it into a multi-purpose off-road trail. This 24.7-mile abandoned railroad runs from Kickapoo Creek in Peoria County to west of Middle Grove in Fulton County. Hanna City has worked for many years in partnership with Peoria County and Farmington to expand and improve the trail network in this region.

In 2015, Peoria County, the original grantee for this project, was awarded funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Recreational Trails Program (RTP) to purchase the rail corridor from UP. Unfortunately, due to the State of Illinois' failure in approving a capital bill which appropriates state grant funding, Peoria County was forced to return the federal grant to the FHWA as they were unable to secure the federal match.

In 2020, with the help of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), the Village of Hanna City applied for a \$2.1 million grant through the FHWA RTP once again to assist in the purchase of the rail corridor. On January 10, 2022, twenty-two months after applying for the RTP grant, Hanna City received final confirmation that the grant was awarded. Peoria County, Farmington, and Hanna City have entered into an intergovernmental agreement to pay the required 20 percent matching funds for the grant.

Since negotiations with UP could not begin until the grant funding was approved, Hanna City has filed a Motion for Adjustment of the Substitute NITU Negotiation Period in order to provide additional time needed to finalize the purchase. There has been avid regional support for this project with 2,000 individual signatures, along with support from organizations such as Bike Peoria, Trail Advocates, and the Former Friends of the Rock Island Trail.

Completion of this project would be of regional significance connecting rural towns throughout central Illinois to downtown Peoria. I urge support of Hanna City's Motion for Issuance of a Substitute NITU and extension of the NITU negotiation period.

Sincerely,

Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress