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April 5, 2022

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Cynthia Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
April 6, 2022
Part of
Public Record

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing in support of the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) and Great Redwood Trail Agency's Notice of Exemption for Abandonment and Railbanking and Notice of Interim Trail Use.

As you know, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) has not operated for 24 years since winter storms devastated the tracks through the Eel River Canyon. Restoration of rail operations between Willits and Humboldt Bay for freight is clearly not feasible. In fact, the NCRA has estimated it would cost \$2.35 billion to rehabilitate the line, which would remain prone to the exceedingly high maintenance costs it experienced during its former operation. The State of California has since authorized the use of the NWP tracks south of Windsor for passenger and freight. The NCRA is seeking to railbank the tracks from Willits north for the Great Redwood Trail – a major recreation development authorized by the California legislature in October 2021. As a result of that legislation, the NCRA is transitioning to the Great Redwood Trail Agency, which will be overseen by the State Coastal Conservancy beginning in summer 2022.

The complete lack of freight traffic on the NWP line since 1998 and the highly improbable restoration of the tracks for freight warrants abandonment and railbanking of the line from Willits to Humboldt Bay. Please give the NCRA's Notice of Exemption for Abandonment and Railbanking and Notice of Interim Trail Use your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

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