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June 10, 2022
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VIA E-FILING

Cynthia T. Brown, Chief of Section
Administration Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

Re: North Coast Railroad Authority – Abandonment Exemption In Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt Counties, California AB-1305X.

Dear Ms. Brown:

On behalf of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, we wish to convey our strong support for the Great Redwood Trail Agency's/North Coast Railroad Authority's (GRTA/NCRA) motions to reject the pending notices of intent to file offers of financial assistance received by your office.

None of the three offers of financial assistance that have been filed in attempt to force GRTA/NCRA to sell its property have or can establish any continued need for freight rail service through the treacherous terrain along the Eel River. The 24-year long embargo on freight operations along the corridor is a testament to its irrelevance to the region, and the over 25-year period that the North Coast Railroad Authority tried and failed to bring freight back is a testament to its infeasibility along the corridor.

The former Northwestern Pacific rail line runs from the San Francisco Bay to the Humboldt Bay through roughly 300 miles of redwood groves, stunning oak valleys, remote river canyons, and other unique California environments. The right-of-way is both some of the most scenic and environmentally important land California, and some of the most treacherous and impassible terrain in the state as well, having bankrupted several companies attempting to operate freight rail service along it.

Due to both the treacherous nature of the terrain and the collapse of Northern California's timber industry, service on the line has been financially and logistically infeasible for decades. For the Surface Transportation Board to oblige a state agency to sell its interest in this critical environmental and economic resource based on such a specious claim violates the essence of STB's regulatory authority.

Thus, we urge the Board to grant the GRTA/NCRA's motion to reject the notices of intent to file offers of financial assistance.



Thank you for your attention to this most important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Cohen
Western Region Director
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Certificate of Service. I hereby certify service by email attachment on June 10 on all parties of record in AB 1305X as of June 10, 2022.