

June 21, 2022

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

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
June 28, 2022
Part of
Public Record

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

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am a retired railroad civil engineer and former Chief Engineer for the North Coast Rail Authority and I am writing you regarding the Board's recent decision to deny the North Coast Railroad Company's late-filed notice of intent file an OFA. The decision to deny the intent to file an OFA has grave consequences for the former Northwestern Pacific (NWP) Railroad line to the Humboldt Bay region. Once the rail line is converted into a trail, the chance to run trains to Eureka will be forever gone.

The Humboldt Bay region now depends on the mostly narrow and winding highway for most of its north/south commerce, and one very restricted highway to the east, along with Marine facilities at the Port of Humboldt Bay. The truck traffic on US hwy 101 through the town of Willits was so congested due to the rail line being out of service that they built a by-pass (money that could have been invested in the rail line).

The politicians who are in favor of abandoning the rail line for the Great Redwood trail are using the "Toxic" Coal Train as an excuse to not rebuild the rail line. In-fact the supporters of the trail don't want to see ANY improvement to the rail line other than for a trail. The rail line took extensive engineering and construction effort (circa 1914) to accommodate the movement of trains on the NWP including many bridges and tunnels through complex topography. To waste this infrastructure on a hiking trail is ludicrous. Coal isn't the ONLY commodity that would be transported on the NWP. Past and potential commodities include lumber, wood products, aggregates, propane, cement, building materials, and of course the popular operation of tourist trains.

Please reconsider this decision for the forever benefit of the now depressed region of Eureka and the Humboldt Bay. And yes, the rail line can be feasibly rebuilt and maintained.

Thank you,



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