

October 5, 2023

307300

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW, Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
October 12, 2023
Part of
Public Record

Re: Docket No. AB-768X (Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern Railroad Corporation
Docket No. AB-180X (Lowville & Beaver river Railroad Company

Dear Ms. Brown:

The enclosed copies of letters in support of abandonment of the rail lines identified in the above Docket numbers have been sent to listed interested parties. I hereby certify to the STB that copies of the letters have been mailed and emailed (*where provided*), to the following listed interested parties:

John K Fiorilla, Esq, 605 Main St, Suite 104, Riverton, NJ 08077 jfiorilla@dierpeterson.com
Dennis Bishop, 5267 Jefferson St., Lowville, NY 13367, cbishop14@twcny.rr.com
Bruce Krug, 2771 West Road, Constableville, NY 13325, krugvale@frontiernet.net
Ron Trottier, PO Box 285, Cape Vincent, NY 13618 & PO Box 317, Croghan, NY 13327,
rtrottie@twcny.rr.com

Joanne & Rodney Dicob, 7714 State Rte 812, Lowville, NY 13367 jdicob@hotmail.com
Richard Meyer, 10455 State Rte 126, Carthage, NY 13619, meyer_trucking08@yahoo.com
Peter Keys, 8420 State Rte 812, Lowville, NY 13367, supervisorkeys@hotmail.com
Eric Schwartzentruber, 5553 Highland Ave, Lowville, NY 13367,
edschwartzentruber@hotmail.com

Brian Reape, PO Box 18, Castorland, NY 13620
Scott M. Doyle, 3707 Roberts Rd, Carthage, NY 13619,
supervisordoyle@townofdenmarkny.org

Enc.
JEM:hs



Sincerely,

Joan E. McNichol

7596 Church Street

Lowville, NY 13367

October 1, 2023

Dear Cynthia T. Brown,

This letter is in strong support of converting the deserted railroad line to a bike trail. Lewis County earned \$60 million this past year from tourism. A bike trail will attract more tourists to our region and thus, more revenue.

Our local residents will have a safe place to walk and ride, enjoying our beautiful countryside. Ours is not a wealthy community. Anything that promotes a healthy lifestyle with little cost to the participants is an added bonus.

The creation of a bike trail is the most viable investment for this property.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert Merry



4237Mud Lake RD

West Leyden, NY 133489

September 30,2023

To Whom It May Concern:

As a child ,I grew up outside of Glenfield ,NY. My family didn't have much so we spent many an hour riding our bikes. It was great fun. However, as the oldest,I had to especially keep an eye out for my autistic brother. He would swerve into on coming traffic. It was scary.

Therefore, I support the developing of a bike trail along the abandoned railroad where all children could ride safely with no fear of the dangers of traffic.

Thankyou for considering this.

Sincerely,

Mackenzie Moshier

Mackenzie Moshier

Cassandra Moser

From: Rebecca Paté-Johnson <rpatejohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 3:06 PM
To: Cassandra Moser
Subject: Rails to Trails

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company -Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

I wholeheartedly support the Rails-to-Trails development initiative in Lewis County, NY. Lewis County has one of the highest rates of obesity, heart disease and suicide per capita in New York State. In addition, our rural county's backroads are becoming increasingly unsafe. In the past week the backroad that I live on has had two accidents; one where the driver was filming a video, exited the road and caused property damage and the other included two speeding motorcyclists where one exited the roadway into a field after a near miss with a truck they illegally passed. The Rails-to-Trails project would provide **safe** and accessible pathways for walking, jogging, cycling, and other recreational activities, promoting a **healthier** lifestyle among our residents. Additionally, Lewis County is one of the poorest counties in New York State. These trails attract tourists, creating opportunities for local businesses and stimulating our local economy. Furthermore, Lewis County is home to a large number of famers. Each year the impact of global warming is evident in the weather changes that negatively affect crops. Rails-to-Trails projects have a positive environmental impact. They repurpose existing infrastructure and preserve green spaces.

In conclusion, I believe that the Rails-to-Trails development in Lewis County is a forward-thinking and invaluable endeavor. It aligns with our community's goals for health, connectivity, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility. I urge you to continue supporting and championing this initiative for the benefit of our present and future generations. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to witnessing the positive changes this project can bring to our part of the North Country.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Pate-Johnson
6714 Old State Road
Castorland, NY 13620

Cassandra Moser

From: Calvin Company <calvincampany@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:22 PM
To: Cassandra Moser
Subject: I wholeheartedly support the Rails-to-Trails development initiative in Lewis County, NY.

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
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395 E Street SW
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Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company -Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

I wholeheartedly support the Rails-to-Trails development initiative in Lewis County, NY. This transformative project promises numerous benefits for our residents and the county.

Rails-to-Trails conversions are proven to enhance the quality of life for communities in various ways. Firstly, they provide safe and accessible pathways for walking, jogging, cycling, and other recreational activities, promoting a healthier lifestyle among our residents. Additionally, these trails foster a sense of community by encouraging social interaction and outdoor engagement.

Moreover, the development of such trails can lead to economic growth. They attract tourists, creating opportunities for local businesses and stimulating our local economy. Property values along these trails tend to rise, which can contribute to increased tax revenue for our municipality. Importantly, Rails-to-Trails projects have a positive environmental impact. They repurpose existing infrastructure and preserving green spaces. In conclusion, I believe that the Rails-to-Trails development in our Lewis County is a forward-thinking and invaluable endeavor. It aligns with our community's goals for health, connectivity, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility. I urge you to continue supporting and championing this initiative for the benefit of our present and future generations. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to witnessing the positive changes this project can bring to our part of the North Country.

Sincerely,

Calvin H. Company
7189 Belfort Road
Croghan, NY 13327

Attn. Cynthia T. Brown

The enclosed letter is in
support of the Rails to Trail
for:

Mohawk Adirondack & Northern
RR Corp. - Docket No. AB# 768

Lowville & Beaver River Railroad
Company - Docket No. AB180

Thanks for your
attention for this
matter,
Shirley Merry

Sept 13, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,
I am writing this letter
in support of Rails to Trails
here in Lewis Co.

First, my personal
reasons to favor this are
I am an avid biker at 74
years old. I bike almost
daily, weather permitting.
I have ridden Rails to Trails
all over the US and in
Canada. It's so much more
enjoyable to ride when one
need not be concerned with
traffic. No such trails
presently exist in Lewis
County. It's a drive to find
such trails.

Secondly, it would
address two issues in our
area: high obesity rate and

need to promote a healthy life style at little cost to participants. Any thing which encourages people to have a more active life style is a win win for both the individual(s) and the community as a whole. For an area with many low income families, they would have access to something to do as a family that's free.

Having ridden trails in many states, I have also seen how they promote the local businesses. Thus, an economic boom our county sorely needs.

A trail would give our local high students a safe place to practice and condition for track meets

Therefore, for all these
forementioned reasons, please
provide our community with
this trail.

Sincerely,
Shirley Merry

September 21, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company - Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

The acquisition of these rail corridors has the potential to improve the lives of Lewis County residents, businesses, and visitors in so many ways. My husband and I have traveled to Maine, Michigan, and Massachusetts enjoying bicycling on these Rail Trails safely meeting people who are pushing strollers and walkers, as well as joggers. They all were enjoying nature and getting exercise.

I have personally experienced injury due to a distracted driver when I was hit by a tractor trailer while on the shoulder of the highway when the driver was using his cellphone. I endured pain and had to have physical therapy for several years. According to the NYS Police, distracted driving is the fastest growing violation surpassing DWI, and speeding.

I implore the Surface Transportation Board to certify the abandonment of these rail lines so that the County can finalize its acquisition and begin the development of these multi-use, public recreational trails to allow exercise places that keep bicyclists, joggers, and community members separated and safe from motorized vehicles.

Sincerely,



Cheryl P. Chartrand
7563 Cedar Street
Lowville, NY 13367

cc: Cassandra Moser, LC Clerk of the Board
A copy of this letter has been mailed to the following parties of record:
John K Fiorilla: 605 Main Street Suite 104 Riverton, NY 08077

Ron Trottier: PO Box 285 Cape Vincent, NY 13618
Ron Trottier: PO Box 317 Croghan, NY 13327
Brian Reape: PO Box 18 Castorland, NY 13620
Richard Meyer: 10455 State Rte 126 Carthage, NY 13619
Bruce Krug: 2771 West Road Constableville, NY 13325
Scott Doyle: 3707 Roberts Road Carthage, NY 13619
Joanne & Rodney Dicob: 7714 State Route 812 Lowville, NY 13367

September 22, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company - Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

The acquisition of these rail corridors has the potential to improve the lives of Lewis County residents, businesses, and visitors in so many ways. The use of the rail trail is for bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians to have a place to bike, run, and walk without being subjected to distracted drivers or motorized vehicles. In addition, Lowville Academy and Beaver River Central students can also have a safe place to practice cross-country. Beaver River School already has had a student hit and killed by a car while running cross-country with his team. Two bikers were hit by vehicles and sustained life-threatening injuries. One was dragged 800 feet by an elderly gentleman who said he never saw her. The other was hit by a tractor trailer. Yes, a tractor trailer, she by the grace of God, survived. The driver was on his cell phone.

There has not been any rail traffic or maintenance for 20 to 30 years. A company that specializes in rail maintenance and repairs estimated it would cost between \$4 and \$5 million per mile to repair the bridges and culverts needed to support today's loads. Unlike with rail trails converted to bike trails, there are no Federal funds available to restore the current railroad tracks. Bicycle trails cost about \$1.5 to \$2 million per mile, and there are Federal programs that support this type of use. Several people have tried to develop a business plan to activate the lines, but the cost always stops them. The county worked with one individual for almost five years to develop a plan, but to no avail.

There is a part of the rail line that crosses Mill Creek in the Village of Lowville, New York. Two individuals have fallen off into the creek and died. One was accidental and one was intentional. If these lines are abandoned, the County of Lewis will make the area around the lines safe and well-maintained. There are several bicycle clubs in the area that will use these new trails as well as local schools and the general public. The County has hired ALTA to design the master plan for this project. They are very experienced in rail trail projects and will lead us to a very useable solution and help us obtain needed funding. The rail has essentially been abandoned and unused for the last 20 years so please officially abandon these rail tracks. This abandonment will allow the county to repair the trails making them safe for everyone.

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to certify the abandonment of these rail lines so that the County can finalize its acquisition and begin the development of these multi-use, public recreational trails.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Chartrand", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Richard Chartrand
7563 Cedar Street
Lowville, NY 13367

cc: Cassandra Moser, LC Clerk of the Board

A copy of this letter has been mailed to the following parties of record:

John K. Fiorilla: 605 Main Street Suite 104 Riverton, NY 08077

Ron Trottier: PO Box 285 Cape Vincent, NY 13618

Ron Trottier: PO Box 317 Croghan, NY 13327

Brian Reape: PO Box 18 Castorland, NY 13620

Richard Meyer: 10455 State Rte 126 Carthage, NY 13619

Bruce Krug: 2771 West Road Constableville, NY 13325

Scott Doyle: 3707 Roberts Road Carthage, NY 13619

Joanne & Rodney Dicob: 7714 State Route 812 Lowville, NY 13367

September 18, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company - Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County, New York so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

I am currently employed by Lewis County as the elected Treasurer. I previously worked in the County Economic Development office, and I also worked for the Village of Lowville. I have been involved in the efforts to acquire and convert these rail corridors since approximately 2006. While working for the Village of Lowville, we secured a \$1.4 M federal Transportation Enhancement grant for this project. Unfortunately, new Village Board members joined the efforts that were opposed to this project and the grant was later rejected.

There are a very small minority of individuals in Lewis County that oppose conversion of rails to trails. These individuals unfortunately do not understand the community benefits that a recreational trail will create. Also, many of those in opposition are neighbors who have a serious "not in my backyard" perspective. We can not allow this minority to again derail this important rail conversion. The Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies annual survey of Lewis County residents has repeatedly asked our county residents if they support this project and the response rate is always 75 % or more in favor. I also am a bicyclist and runner. I am regularly in contact with community members who realize the incredible impact a trail would have. In fact, I just discussed this today with a local citizen whose 70 plus year old wife has purchased an e-bike and is looking forward to riding on the trail.

Through my career in economic development, I have queried our local manufacturing businesses. They realistically know that redevelopment of the rail corridors for freight transportation will never happen. I also have analyzed the potential of a tourist rail operation. While this is popular in many areas, the cost and demographic numbers do not support this in Lewis County.

It is incredibly important that the Surface Transportation Board approves this abandonment so our community can begin the long process of improving this asset for trails that will benefit our residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Eric J Virkler

LOWVILLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, LLP

5402 Dayan Street, Suite 100
Lowville, NY 13367-1117

Internal Medicine: 315-376-4600 Pediatrics: 315-376-5558 Fax: 315-376-5587
Lab: 315-376-1407 Lab Fax: 315-376-3626

Steven L. Lyndaker, MD Mary Lou Feilmeier, MD Shereen E. Palmer, MD Kathryn McHugh, MD
Meredith Lizotte, NP Dyana M. Manning, RPA Troy Moser, PA Melissa Muha, NP Heidi Roggie, FNP

September 13, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company -Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

I am a pediatrician and one of the managing partners at a multispecialty primary care practice in downtown Lowville. Our family moved to Lowville in 2001. The old train tracks which run directly through the village and connecting communities have been overgrown and a danger to walk on since we have been here.

The other pediatrician, Dr. Feilmeier and I have long been concerned that our student athletes in track and cross country run on the roads for their training. We were excited then to learn of the rails to trails project, and the opportunity to develop a trail system for these kids to train safely. We also appreciate the opportunity for families to bike and run together, and for adults to exercise in a convenient and safe environment, which is affordable for everyone.

My husband and I have lived in communities with dedicated recreational trails, and have seen firsthand the benefit these are to the physical and mental well-being of families and individuals. There is also the economic benefit of helping businesses recruit young professionals to move to this lovely, but remote, area. This is of particular importance to our medical practice, as well as the local hospital, Lewis County General, where we are on medical staff. We believe that a recreational trail will help us more effectively show other providers why Lewis County is a such wonderful place to live and work. The Rails to Trails project has our wholehearted support.

Sincerely,



Shereen E. Palmer, MD

September 16, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp – Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company –Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I unconditionally support the abandonment of the above Inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

My husband and I have lived here our entire life – my husband, at the age of 91, has been an active biker for nearly 40 years. Many times he has wished for safe biking trails instead of using our narrow county and town roads, along with the inconsiderate drivers who make biking a safety hazard. After using the Pumpkinvine Trail In Indiana, he feels that is the answer for our old abandoned railroad lines.

These rail lines are so overgrown with weeds, etc. because of years of neglect. They are a perfect answer to his ideas of safe biking along with hiking trails. Our economy would also benefit from good, safe biking and hiking trails as an added attraction to visitors from out of the area.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Alton Virkler

September 5, 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company - Docket No. AB 180

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

The acquisition of these rail corridors has the potential to improve the lives of Lewis County residents, families, businesses, and visitors in myriad ways. The rail trails would provide a safe and scenic place for people to walk, bike, run, and enjoy the outdoors. The trails would also be a great place for people to exercise and get some fresh air. I'm an avid walker, hiker, runner, and biker. It can be dangerous to be out on the open road with large farm equipment, distracted drivers, and narrow or non-existent shoulders. A safe and attractive pathway will be a wonderful place to enjoy the outdoors in a safer manner. There are many running and biking events and school sports in Lewis County who could begin using a path such as this immediately. The rail trail will support a healthy lifestyle for all ages of Lewis County residents and visitors. I am very supportive of the creation of a footpath and prioritize non-motorized usage of this corridor.

The rail trails would boost the local economy by attracting tourists and businesses. The trails would provide a new amenity for local residents as well as tourists. A trail such as this will be an affordable recreation opportunity for many which is an important consideration for this area. Additionally, the draw to visitors will help local businesses as they are providing goods and services for those enjoying the path. It can be a way to help connect communities in Lewis County which is a benefit I am highly looking forward to.

There are some members of the community that seek to preserve the rail system in the North Country. This is not at odds with the current proposition to transition the current impassable rail line to one that can be enjoyed in new ways. The trails would be a great way to preserve the history of Lewis County and adapt them for the current and future residents and visitors. The rail lines have been a part of the community for many years, and they are a reminder of the county's rich history. Being able to enjoy adapted rail lines in new ways benefits all generations in ways that are suitable for the communities needs.

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to certify the abandonment of these rail lines so that the County can finalize its acquisition and begin the development of these multi-use, public recreational trails.

Sincerely,

Jessica Clemons

Jessica Clemons
7310 River Rd
Lowville, NY 13367

cc: Cassandra Moser, LC Clerk of the Board

12 Sep 2023

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown, Chief Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street SW
Room 1034
Washington, DC 20423-0001

**Re: Mohawk Adirondack & Northern RR Corp - Docket No. AB 768
Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company - Docket No. AB 180**

Dear Ms. Brown:

I write in support of abandonment of the above inactive/unused railroad lines in Lewis County so that the rail line property can be transferred by the rail companies to the County of Lewis for development of rail trail public recreational uses.

The acquisition of these rail corridors has already proven beneficial in many locations and has the potential to improve the lives of Lewis County residents, businesses, and visitors as well in so many ways.

- Encouragement of healthy behavior and areas for residents to enjoy outdoor activities all year long in safe environments.
- Safe trails for school teams to have practices and events.
- Safe walking and biking trails for all population groups.
- Support of economic development through tourism – a destination for visitors to enjoy all of the activities and environment Lewis County has to offer.
- The potential to boost economic development through tourism and the business development which will follow.
- Rail to Trails have been proven to increase the value of surrounding properties.
- Young families are more likely to stay or come to Lewis County with rail trails and an important way for the County to sustain its existing tax base in the future.
- Ability to connect communities

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to certify the abandonment of these rail lines so that the County can finalize its acquisition and begin the development of these multi-use, public recreational trails.

From: "bstinson" <bstinson@metrocast.net>
To: rmerry@twcny.rr.com
Cc:
Bcc:
Priority: Normal
Date: Friday September 29 2023 1:57:05PM
letter

Ms. Cynthia Brown

Chief Section of Administration

Office of Proceedings

395 E Street SW

Room 1034

Washington, DC 20423-001

RE: Mohawk, Lowville & Beaver River Railroad Company

Docket No AB 180

Dear Madame,

I am writing to encourage the construction of a rail trail on the Lowville & Beaver River rails. My husband and I visit

Upstate New York every summer and love riding what few trails there are in the Lowville/Beaver River area.

The sad thing is that most are not paved and do not provide an enjoyable ride.

Building this rail trail can only be seen as a positive for the area. I grew up there so I know what it's like to live there.

This is a much-needed resource for the people who live locally and those vacationers who come to enjoy it.

The trail would be a great asset and great incentive to spend time in the area adding to the area's economy - hotels,

restaurants, and stores.

My deepest desire is that you value this project as much as locals of that area do, those who visit do, and proceed

with this project for the health and well-being of everyone.

Thank you for your careful consideration,

Barbara Stinson