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Office of Chief Counsel
November 2, 2026
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Public Record

THE TOWN OF
WOODSTOCK
Virginia

November 2, 2026

VIA E-FILING
Chief of Case Administration
Office of Chief Counsel
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

RE: ***Norfolk Southern Railway Company – Abandonment Exemption – In Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, VA, AB-290 (Sub-No.425X)***

Dear Chief of Case Administration:

The Town of Woodstock is an interested party to the aforementioned case. As Mayor of the Town of Woodstock, I hereby ask to be treated as a party of record on behalf of the Town.

Holding the Proceeding in Abeyance Would Materially Harm the Town of Woodstock Without Serving Any Rail Purpose.

If the proceeding were held in abeyance, the Commonwealth's acquisition, its Trail Use Request, the Town of Woodstock's localized planning and investments, and the physical corridor itself would all be held in limbo during the pendency of the merger. This would leave our town burdened with a vacant, unmaintained, and potentially hazardous blight. During this period, the rail infrastructure would fall further into disrepair, while the corridor would yield no transportation or economic benefit to our residents.

The Town strongly supports maintaining the full corridor as a continuous transportation asset, specifically for the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail. While we do not object to the cessation of rail service, the Town of Woodstock has a vital interest in preserving this continuous linear corridor for future public use. Preserving this corridor as a public trail asset is a high-priority objective deeply rooted in our community's long-term vision. This initiative directly aligns with multiple adopted planning documents, including:

- The Town **Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**, adopted in 2019, envisions 12.45 miles of active transportation infrastructure, connecting Woodstock residents and visitors to nature, neighborhood parks, schools, and the Historic Downtown. This town mobility plan envisions the Norfolk Southern corridor's conversion to a major multimodal path passing

through the center of Woodstock thereby supporting the Town's desire to improve connectivity throughout its neighborhoods and destinations.

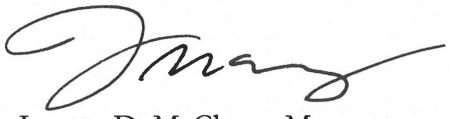
- The Town **Comprehensive Plan**, rewritten and adopted in 2025, fully supports the corridor's utilization as a rail-to-trail. Our land use objectives envision the evolution of deteriorating and vacant properties along the rail corridor to a "Rail Heritage" district to support high-quality redevelopment "capitalizing on the introduction of the bicycle rail-to-trail through the railroad corridor."

- The Town **Strategic Plan** incorporates actions for the organization to identify ways for the town to develop public property in support of the rail trail. Our first investment occurred in 2021 with the creation of a 35-space parking lot along the trail in the heart of Woodstock. Additionally, in 2025 Town Council purchased a 1.74 acre property along the rail corridor for a future combination municipal office and police department facility.

Lastly, forcing a delay does not protect any existing or prospective rail service, because no such service exists. Passenger rail service ended in Woodstock in 1948, and rail activity through Woodstock has incrementally ceased to a point resulting in the "discontinuance" of rail activities through Woodstock in 2016. The railroad has fallen into disrepair and become overgrown and some crossings have been paved over.

Proceeding now does not foreclose the return of rail; interim trail use and railbanking actively keep the corridor intact and legally available for future rail use. Further delays jeopardize the town's planned public investments and land use planning along this important transportation corridor. For community members who hope to see trains return to the Valley someday, railbanking is the only viable path that preserves that long-term option.

Respectfully,



Jeremy D. McCleary, Mayor
Town of Woodstock

cc: Parties of Record

Certification of Service

Via signature above, I hereby certify that on November 2, 2026, a copy of this letter has been electronically filed with the Surface Transportation Board and served on all parties of record in Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 425X) by electronic mail.