



Allegheny Trail Alliance

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October 28, 2018

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
October 30, 2018
Part of
Public Record

Dear Ms. Brown,

RE: Docket EP-749-1

I am submitting these comments on behalf of the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a nonprofit organization which has coordinated allied trail groups in Pennsylvania and Maryland to build, steward, and promote the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile rail-trail connecting Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Md., where it meets the C&O Canal Towpath.

We are opposed to a rule under consideration by the Surface Transportation Board that would limit the number of extensions of the trail use negotiation period to six 180-day periods.

Our own work to build the Great Allegheny Passage began in 1978 and was not completed until 2013. Imposing a three-year limitation on negotiations would unnecessarily obstruct railbanking. All kinds of factors play into rail-trail success, including raising matching funds, working through appraisal processes, and often, environmental assessments and a host of consultants who are weighing in on such. It takes time, and many railroads are willing to extend negotiations as needed.

Several groups in our region are seeking to connect new rail-trails to the Great Allegheny Passage, some in rural locations, and some within Pittsburgh, making the city and surrounding region a nationally-known hub for rail-trail adventure, and drawing more long-distance bike travelers --and the money they spend -- to our trail towns. We desire for their building processes to be as flexible as possible, for the greatest good of the region.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bryan Perry
Executive Director