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My son attended a private Christian high school, which he bicycled to independently every day, even in the winter. To do so, he rode the well-maintained Oak Leaf Trail up to a discontinuity in the trail, then had to cross a major intersection and ride unsafely in an area without a bike trail, before reaching the school.

He graduated, and my daughter, who is younger, needed to decide where to attend high school. We were advised that it was too unsafe for her to get to school the way her brother did, and that we should send her to a different school. But fortunately, we had seen the plans for how and when the discontinuous segments in the Oak Leaf Trail would be joined, pending complex negotiations with a railroad company. We were relieved to be able to count on the timeline and send her to the same school, safely riding the Oak Leaf Trail virtually the entire way.

The joining of the discontinuous segments took years, longer than the 3 years allowed by the proposal. If the proposal were in effect, that would have prevented the completion of this important segment of the Oak Leaf Trail, which would have prevented this evangelical family from educating our children at the best Christian school in Wisconsin. We urge you to halt this proposed rule change shortening the deadlines, and urge you instead to retain the current rules that recognize the complexity of the negotiations that railroads must engage in.