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August 4, 2017

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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown

Chief, Section of Administration

Office of Proceedings Surface Transportation Board

395 E Street, S.W., Room 1034

Washington, DC 20024

Re: Docket No. FD 36137

City of Fishers, City of Noblesville, and Hamilton County, Indiana

Petition for Partial Revocation of Exemption

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am a lifelong resident of Tipton, and in the coming weeks, I will become a resident of Noblesville. I have a strong opposition toward the conversion of the historic Nickel Plate railroad line to a trail between Indianapolis and Tipton. This history-rich railroad has connected me with a multitude of friends, but I am not alone in this regard; hundreds, if not thousands of others, in just the local community alone, have similar stories to share, and to see future generations not have the opportunity to experience what we have is a disgrace. However, personal stories aside, opponents of the trail have voiced themselves by the thousands, and to know that city officials have simply ignored their own people in this manner is unreasonable. Seeing the city attempt to act "trendy" by placing the priority of a brief and insignificant financial gain over a significant tourist attraction, with an irreplaceable 165 consecutive years of history, is undeniably illogical. When history disappears, it never comes back. The opposition to the conversion of the Nickel Plate Road to a trail is not only voiced by hundreds of lawn signs throughout Hamilton County and surrounding counties reading "Save The Train" and "Save Our Train," but through online petitions as well. A petition started on Change.org has reached over

6,200 supporters (it can be found under the name "Save the Nickel Plate Road (railroad from Noblesville, IN to Indianapolis, IN)"). The people have made their opposing voices heard, and they continue to do so.

This railroad is not only important for heritage and recreational reasons; the communities along it depend on its convenience. Multiple communities throughout Hamilton County have grown in population at an alarming rate since the early 1990s, and road traffic proves to be a significant problem much of the time. Though I am not a resident of the county yet, I have been there countless times and experienced the traffic myself. Particularly, the highways between Fishers and Indianapolis are heavily congested during the Indiana State Fair. A large number of State Fair visitors rely on the Indiana State Fairtrain to cut down on highway traffic, allowing an increase in visitors, and therefore, a larger profit for all. Not only would the removal of the line destroy history and go against what the people of Hamilton County are asking, it would undermine one of the most valuable and convenient services available to a multitude of communities; in the end, a destructive decision that would prove harmful to all.

To only remove the portion between Noblesville and Fishers, as opposed to all 37 miles between Indianapolis and Tipton, is a completely illogical decision as well. Because the majority of revenue for maintenance costs for track, equipment, etc. comes from the Fairtrain alone, having that portion of the line which the Fairtrain operates destroyed would not leave enough revenue for maintenance of the north end. It would significantly cripple any rail operator on the rail, thus crippling the economies of three counties, and the businesses the rail line serves.

Overall, I vote against converting the Nickel Plate Road into a trail. It would be an ignorant, selfish, and short-sighted decision that would destroy history, the growth of small-town businesses, connections among a number of communities, and further worsen the already terrible congestion of Hamilton and Marion County highways, thus leaving a significant dent in the economies of these communities. It would be counterintuitive. Is it worth all this destruction simply for the wallets of a few greedy individuals who are not concerned with the very people of their own communities? I say no, and so do thousands of others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Fishback", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Owen Fishback

I certify that these comments have been provided to the Applicant's Attorney of Record via email. /S/ Logan J. Day on behalf of Owen Fishback | Save the Nickel Plate, Inc. | info@savethenickelplate.org