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Office of Proceedings
November 1, 2018
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Public Record

Docket: EP-749 -1

Subject: Railbanking

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Message:

is extremely important to keep negotiations for rails-to-trails (railbanking) open for more than six 180-day extensions in order to make the best use of no longer used railways. We have found that multiple owners require extended negotiations for regulatory, funding and other legitimate reasons. Without sufficient time, the Kickapoo Rail Train from Urbana to Danville, IL could never have come to pass, even the 6.7 miles now constructed, not to mention the whole ~27 miles. It takes time to meet with the various owners and to raise funds.

Rail trails are a boon to communities through which they pass and to users in the surrounding geographic area for recreation, to raise awareness of the adjacent land use, and for beauty.

If the proposed rule had been in place, we could never have built this trail. I have led rides on this trail, and friends of friends have built a restaurant at the current stopping place to build on the economic base of the town of St. Joseph, IL. It is attractive too, to bicyclists around the state.

We needed more than 20 years to make this happen. We oppose the proposed rule.