

August 18, 2017

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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings Surface Transportation Board
2395 E. Street SW Room 1034
Washington, DC 20024

Docket No. FD 36137
City of Fishers, City of Noblesville and Hamilton County, Indiana
Petition for Partial Revocation of Exemption

Dear Ms. Brown,

Please find filing to the above-captioned proceeding, written comment regarding the "Petition for Partial Revocation of Exemption filed on August 1, 2017 with the Surface Transportation Board. A copy of this comment has also been served on the attorney Mr. Robert A. Wimbish, representing the collective owners, City of Fishers, City of Noblesville and Hamilton County (the "owners") of a railroad line in Indiana.

As a former Mayor of Noblesville and three- term Common Council member (currently), I wish to express my concern for the history and continued value given by the Nickel Plate Railroad. The 41 miles of rail line has been an important historic tourism driver for over 30 years taking passengers into our state Capital as well as north to scenic small town visits. The track continues to be viable and can be used to this day. The local citizens have shown great concern about the process used by the government take down and for the lack of transparency of the process. How can a comparison be made between 41 miles of usable rail line adding economic value to multi cities and towns or creating a walking trail between two communities? There is no comparison. Hamilton County is the fastest growing county in the state and once again giving into the traffic by limiting train crossings with little regard to the values of the system that will never be replaced should it be destroyed.

The rail line is owned by municipal bodies and has been operated by a historic rail road museum with priceless cars and opportunity to experience once in a life time memories for children, adults and visitors to the area. This operation has been profitable and continues to have the capability to continue to perform and provide service with new ideas for passenger travel into Indianapolis for football, basketball and even the Indianapolis 500 racing season by providing an alternate to passenger car travel resulting in thousands of travelers off the roads.

The decision by local officials to rip the rails and rip any chance of visionary opportunities must be given more time for discussion, finding options and opening the conversation to the citizens who will pay the bill. Communities and regions are struggling to be unique and experience good planning for their citizens. Hamilton County has such a unique advantage over other areas now. Asking for Revocation of Exemption for the Nickel Plate Rail Line.

Sincerely,
Mary Sue Rowland

Mary Sue Rowland
Mayor of Noblesville 1988 – 2006
Common Council City of Noblesville 2016-2020