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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,

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

This is a rail line that has provided passenger transportation for more than 24 years. It has the potential to provide rail service between the communities of Noblesville and Fishers and downtown Indianapolis.

As this railbanking project has developed, the citizens of Noblesville and Fishers were not informed either of the project itself, or, when the project came to light, of the true impact of this project on the communities.

Rail use on this line was suspended by the Owners. This suspension was unwarranted. It was an unnecessary move taken to advance their goal of railbanking the line. The public was not informed of this goal at the time of their decision to suspend operations on the line.

The Owners have chosen a new rail operator for the line. This was done through a very biased process whereby evaluators ranked five applicants' proposals. Evaluators were appointed by bodies sympathetic to the Owners' position. Scoring was not blind. Evaluators had full knowledge of the identity of each applicant and, consequently, advanced candidates endorsed by the Owners.

Railroads petition the Board for an abandonment exemption when service on their line proves to be financially unsustainable. However, in this unique situation, the railroad is owned by municipal bodies and was operated by a third party, non-profit

operator as a heritage railway. The railroad was sustained and maintained almost exclusively by ticket revenue and donations. While there is not presently a physical connection to the national railroad network, it is believed that the necessary Right-of-Way still exists to easily reconnect the Line with Norfolk Southern to the North or CSX to the South.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lois G. Holbrook
Resident, Noblesville, IN