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Group/Affiliation: landowner

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There must be a reasonable limit on how long a potential trail sponsor has to negotiate for a right-of-way. I live with one of these through my property and you have no idea how frustrating it is that after 22 years of being absent, the trail sponsor has finally decided to develop a trail through my property. By allowing the negotiating period to be extended to infinity because of "good cause" is nonsense. If they want to build a trail then get on with it. I'm opposed to the 3 - 1 year periods for negotiations but if that's the best you can do then I'll take it. But, anything past that for anything but "extraordinary circumstances" should be disallowed. Everyone in the building at the STB knows that a bunch of trail requests are filed by groups that have no intention of developing a trail or have no idea how to put together the money or resources needed. The right-of-way through my property is one such example. The trail group that railbanked it admitted they did so for no other purpose than to prevent the abandonment. They tried to get the local cities to take it on but the cities rejected it so the right-of-way sat for more than 15 years with the group doing nothing. Now it's been 22 years and they still haven't completed the trail (12.5 miles) and they have another 33 miles of right-of-way they railbanked in 1997 and at the rate this group is working that trail will literally never be developed. Those landowners are in perpetual limbo as to the use of their property. Some have plowed it under and planted crops on it. With the "good cause" extensions wanted by the RTC, this practice will continue and landowners will be left with an unattended and undeveloped right-of-way through their property with no idea when or if anything will ever happen. Imagine trying to sell a property in the country with a "potential" trail on it. How is one to know if they can get 5th amendment compensation if the negotiations go on forever when there is only a 6 year window to file? On ours, the trail group literally disappeared for 15 years so no one thought a trail would ever be developed so no takings cases were filed. At least with the 3 year limit then a landowner can get a case filed in the 6 year window. Please, limit the negotiating period to the shortest reasonable time. 3 years is more than enough time for a potential sponsor to crap or get off the pot. The purpose of railbanking is to save rights-of-way, not create trails. The trail is nothing but a byproduct of the process. The STB treats trail use as the main purpose of railbanking when it is not.