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As a bicycle commuter and children's healthcare professional, I know from personal and professional experience the importance of biking trails. Here in Minneapolis, an extensive network of rail-to-trail projects has led to a marked increase in the number of people using cycling for both recreation and as a mode of transportation to work, school, or errands. The Midtown Greenway is my daily commuting path; on any given day I see between 20 and 40 other cyclists in my 10 minutes on the trail. This includes not only commuters but individual school children and school groups. The cumulative effect is to decrease our carbon footprint, reduce traffic congestion and need for parking, and most importantly promote public health. For example, the park and recreational trail system in the Twin Cities is an important factor in Minnesota's ranking as third lowest in childhood obesity.

The proposed regulation would threaten the ability to create such rail-to-trail projects. Negotiations for railbanking are often complex transactions; the arbitrary 3 year time limit would undoubtedly derail (no pun intended) many such projects. I urge you to reject the proposed regulation, which would be detrimental to public health.