

Chairman • David Lubar



President • Julia Taylor

Greater Milwaukee Committee
247 Freshwater Way
Suite 400
Milwaukee, WI 53204
April 12, 2019

247484

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
April 12, 2019
Part of
Public Record

RE: Docket EP 753 – Petition for Rulemaking

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Ms. Brown,

These comments, filed on behalf of the Greater Milwaukee Committee are in support of a petition by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) for the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to establish a one-year period for any initial interim trail use negotiating period and codify the STB's authority to grant extensions of the negotiating period for good cause shown.

At the Greater Milwaukee Committee, we believe trails are a critical public asset that should be easier to create, not more difficult. Multiple trails in Wisconsin exist in part due to lengthy negotiations beyond three years, including the Oak Leaf Trail right here in Milwaukee. Six additional trails across the state required this process to come to fruition with an additional one in the process now. The Oak Leaf Trail is an incredible local asset and is important to the Greater Milwaukee areas to connect communities, provide low cost recreation and exercise, as well as additional transportation options. Proposals for railbanked trails along the 30th Street Corridor, as well as extensions to the Beerline Trail, which we work closely on with a local collaborative, are almost certain to take longer than the proposed 180-day window, and possibly take at least three years. Given many realities of the railroad industry and these projects, this work takes time.

Based on our direct experience with railbanking negotiations before the STB, we urge the Board to adopt RTC's proposed rule in Docket No. EP 753.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tony Panciera
Director, Greater Milwaukee Committee