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Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC

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Dear Members of the Board,

I'm writing in response to your proposed rules changes to the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 which has worked so well for Railroads, cities, counties, states and non-profits. The timeline that is proposed of only 3 years to consummate a deal with all entities involved in a Rail Trail, places undue hardship on all these entities. As in Alabama's case in a proposal that we are working on now, a 45-mile rail corridor, pulling together 3 counties, 7 city decision makers, the funding of 2 million dollars has been daunting. We were finally getting there when the Alabama Department of Transportation jumped in and placed a cog in the wheel. It is finally working out...but, stuff happens, in all cases It has been 8 years. Your rule making would have not let this potential economic engine proposal get off the ground.

It has been proven over and over again, Rails to Trails invigorate depressed and rural places. This is one of those areas. These little towns are off the map, off the beaten path and need this desperate shot in the arm. It would give them a needed life line to a whole new world of tourism.

Please don't do this to all these entities that have placed so much into these sorts of projects that have created new life in so many areas that had nothing. It does take many Villages to create a Rail Corridor and a Rail Trail....placing a timeline that cuts off that discussion, that pooling of dollars that the rail ways are now asking would be a death nail.

Sincerely,



Debbie W. Quinn, Past Chairman

Alabama Trails Commission

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