

Docket #: EP -749

3 year limit on negotiations

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I am president of Klickitat Trail Conservancy, a nonprofit organization that has promoted the development of the Klickitat Rail Trail in Washington, in conjunction with WA State Parks and the Forest Service. Preserving rail corridors as trails benefits people now, but also saves these corridors for the country's future. Trying to create a corridor today is very difficult, so it is to the country's future benefit to save as many existing corridors as possible. It is therefore not sound policy to make it more difficult to save these corridors. Our organization works with the Forest Service and WA State Parks to develop this trail, so we have seen first hand how much time it takes to permit and then implement any trail improvements, such as decking a trestle or building a trailhead. Three years has come to look like a short time in the world of government action. I'm sure getting the financing, agreements, and permits together for a railbanking effort can often take more than three years, and how can anyone guarantee at the beginning how long it will take, or what difficulties will arise? I have seen so many of our proposed trail improvements take much longer than three years, and they should be simpler than the rail-banking process. A time limit like this will encourage opponents of a project to put impediments in the way just to delay it, in order to kill it. It will discourage rail-banking by making it seem impossible or very difficult to do in the given time, especially if the opposition is working to delay it. Again, saving transportation corridors as trails is both for the current and future benefit of this country, and that is why the law was passed. For the good of the country, rail banking should not be discouraged or prevented by the details of the rules governing the railbanking procedure. Please do not implement this new rule limiting the time railbanking can take. It is bad for the nation's future. Thank you for considering my comments. Most

Sincerely, Barbara Robinson, President

Klickitat Trail Conservancy