



MISSOURI BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FEDERATION

**MAKING MISSOURI A BETTER PLACE
TO WALK AND RIDE A BICYCLE!**

1709 MISSOURI BLVD, STE. C #200, JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65109

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January 9th, 2015

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
January 9, 2015
Part of
Public Record

Re: Missouri Central Railroad Company -Abandonment Exemption - Cass, Pettis, Benton, Morgan, Miller, Cole, Osage, Maries, Gasconade, and Franklin Counties, Missouri, STB Docket AB-1068 (Sub-No. 3X) and Central Midland Railway Company - Discontinuance of Service Exemption- Cass, Pettis, Benton, Morgan, Miller, Cole, Osage, Maries, Gasconade, and Franklin Counties, Missouri, STB DocketAB-1070 (Sub-No. 3X)

Dear Ms. Brown,

The Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation is a statewide coalition of bicycle, pedestrian, and trails groups and supporters representing over 40,000 citizens who are members of our organization and affiliated groups.

We are writing to express our strong support for the conversion of the corridor referenced in the above referenced dockets for interim trail use under the National Trails System Act.

Continued use of the corridor as an active railroad is not economically feasible. Since the cessation of active railroad use over 30 years ago, the corridor has developed into an eyesore and maintenance problem for communities all up and down the railroad line. The line does not add to the economic development of the adjoining communities but in fact subtracts from the region's economic vitality because it is unused land that continually accumulates a maintenance deficit without any way to address that deficit.

By contrast, if the corridor is converted to trail use, it becomes a very positive asset for the communities through which it will pass and for the state as a whole. The corridor will be clean, maintained, and well used by citizens and tourists alike. In addition, the corridor will be preserved in perpetuity in case railroad use ever becomes economically viable in the future.



MISSOURI BICYCLE AND
PEDESTRIAN FEDERATION
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Missouri has extensive experience developing and using a statewide rail trail over a span of decades—the Katy Trail, established in 1991. The effect of the trail transformation of that corridor has been a net positive for every community along its path. It is used by hundreds of thousands of visitors annually and is reported as one of the state’s top and most visible tourist attractions statewide, nationally, and internationally. The Katy Trail corridor brings more than \$18 million in annual economic development to the communities along its path.

Communities along the path of the Katy Trail—including those who were bitterly opposed to the development of the Katy Trail when it was first proposed 25 years ago—have now become, overwhelmingly, supporters of the trail and of the economic development opportunities the trail brings to communities along its path.

The Rock Island Trail occupies a similar position across the state of Missouri as does the Katy—in fact, the Rock Island is perhaps even more advantageously situated for tourism potential. The Rock Island Trail will undoubtedly bring the same type of benefits to its corridor that the Katy Trail brings. The benefits are to the economy, to community health, to the environment, to tourism, to the communities, and for the historic preservation of the corridor.

Many citizens and communities along the proposed trail are strong supporters of the proposed Rock Island Trail already and I am confident that many more will become supporters once the trail is in place.

In addition, the trail plays a key role in creating a complete, connected statewide trail system across Missouri, meaning that its positive benefits will include both communities immediately adjacent to the corridor but also to communities all across the state and the five-state region that will have trail connections directly from their communities to this new statewide trail.

We request to be made a party of record in this proceeding. By my signature below, I certify service upon the following parties of record by deposit in U.S. Mail, postage pre-paid first class, on the date of this letter:

Sandra L. Brown (for the Missouri Central Railroad Company)
Thompson Hine Llp
1919 M Street, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Mary Moulton Bryan
Department Of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102



Blake Hurst
Missouri Farm Bureau Federation
P.O. Box 658
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Thank you for your work to facilitate the process converting this corridor to interim trail use.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ruhlen

President, Missouri Bicycling & Pedestrian Federation