

Alabama

Trails Commission

Post Office Box 5690 | Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690

October 31, 2018

Surface Transportation Board
395 East Street S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20423-0001

Re: Comment on proposed rule change affecting trail use negotiation period

Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

This comment is filed by the Alabama Trails Commission, a public entity in Alabama working to enhance the development and use of multi-use trails throughout our state, regarding Docket #EP-749-0.

(Sub-No. 1)

Out-of-Service rail corridors provide invaluable opportunities to create off-street active transportation pathways connecting people to where they live, work, and play, making communities stronger, healthier, and economically vibrant. Additionally, these corridors are incredibly important assets for many communities because they provide future industrial and business recruitment options that may not otherwise exist. Therefore, it is critical that rail corridors be preserved intact under Section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act when local and state partners are able to step forward as proponents.

Rail corridor acquisitions are complex and cumbersome, and often require multiple years to consummate. The proposed rule change limiting the negotiating period for these acquisitions would render the vast majority of them impossible, and **would effectively kill the Railbanking program.**

We strongly encourage you to leave in place the current rules to enable local proponents and rail companies the necessary time to preserve these corridors and to achieve the intended purposes of Section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act. The Railbanking program has been an outstanding tool benefitting thousands of communities across the United States. We simply cannot afford to lose it.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amy Rauworth
Chairman