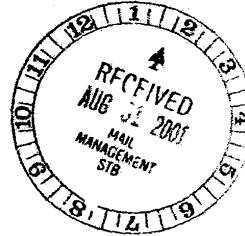


206254

August 31, 2001



Honorable Vernon Williams  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

RE: 1411 Corp - Exemption - in Lancaster County, Pa, AB 581X; Middletown  
& Hummelstown Railroad Co. - Exemption - In Lancaster, Pa, AB-529X

Dear Mr. Williams:

Although we are either members of Columbia Borough School Board or candidates, we are writing to you solely in our individual capacity, not on behalf of the Board of School Directors. We, the undersigned candidates, represent the endorsed Democratic candidates for school board as well as the endorsed candidate of the Republican-affiliated Columbia Pride Team.

With this filing, we register our enthusiastic support for Shawnee Run Greenway Inc.'s (SRGI) plans to build a recreational trail in Columbia Borough and West Hempfield Township. We believe this nonprofit's vision compliments the Commonwealth's goal of developing a network of greenways connecting corridors of open space, natural landscape features and recreational sites.

Greenways provide recreational and educational opportunities for students, families and individuals of all ages and abilities. Students in Columbia Borough schools and Our Lady of the Angels parochial schools are reaping the educational benefits of the greenway and the Shawnee Run Watershed Project.

Through the efforts of Columbia Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) and SRGI environmental learning opportunities are already being created within this conservation-zoned land. The greenway corridor with its link to Shawnee Run will provide area schools with a creative way of meeting Pennsylvania Department of Education's Standards for Environment and Ecology while helping achieve the goals of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement. Through receipt of a first round DEP Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Grant, CDDC has created a Watershed Management Master Plan. This plan includes partnering with area school districts to make cross-curricular outdoor environmental study areas part of their curriculum. Part of this program is a complete environmental inventory of the Greenway and starting an ongoing water quality monitoring of Shawnee Run so that results of implementing a Watershed Management Plan can be compared to baseline data. Partnering with local schools has already begun through a weeklong teacher training that provided instruction on how to incorporate a cross-curricular learning style approach to

improving water quality. Through annual clean-ups and development of environmental walking tours we can educate the community about recycling and the effects of pollution on the ecosystem. The development of phase one and subsequent phases of the Greenway will provide safe and convenient access to these study areas. By combining multiple funding streams it is our feeling that future generations will benefit from this innovative project's approach to environmental awareness and improvement of the Susquehanna River Basin and Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Developing this rail corridor for alternative public use will provide students and residents with immeasurable benefits. Greenways enhance the sense of place in a community, add positively to the economic climate and protect our water resources by buffering non-point sources of pollution. Most importantly, we feel this linear corridor will provide limitless opportunities for conservation, recreation and hands-on environmental education.

We are aware that an adjacent property owner has taken steps to invoke a federal statute that if allowed would force the current owner, M&H Railroad to sell the property, against their will to the entity invoking the statute. We believe this would be highly detrimental to the greenway project and serve no commensurate benefit to the community at large. Therefore, we, the undersigned taxpayers and elected officials, join Shawnee Run Greenway Inc. in its motion for exemption from OFA and in its motion to dismiss the OFA.

Sincerely,

William K. Roel

Dale M. Odom

Christine A. Brundage

Barry S. Brown

Thomas R. Stuckler

Rehae E. Seares

David H. Coughlin

Janice L. Kromer

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify service of the foregoing by US Mail postage prepaid first class  
this 31<sup>st</sup> day of August 2001, upon the following counsel:

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*William K. Bach*