

Elbert

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Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton and Bowman, Georgia

#E1-20379
FD 35756
DAW

January 9, 2014

Mr. Kevin Starnes
Skelly and Loy, Inc.
449 Eisenhower Boulevard, Suite 300
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 3576, Hartwell Railroad Company – Construction and Operation Exemption – In Elbert County, Georgia; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Mr. Starnes:

I am writing this letter in response to your request for comments on the Hartwell Railroad Company's petition requesting authority to construct and operate approximately 1,400 feet of connecting track between its existing rail line and the adjacent CSX Abbeville Subdivision. Speaking on behalf of the Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman, I offer our support of this project. Not only are we supportive of the rail line connection, but we are also willing to work with the Hartwell Railroad Company and CSX to ensure that this project is completed.

Elbert County's distance from an interstate is a serious disadvantage and serves as a major challenge in our economic development efforts. Being that logistics and transportation is one of the top factors in site selection decisions, having this connection would allow us to compete for additional projects from which we would have previously been eliminated. Additionally, this collaboration between the Hartwell Railroad Company and CSX would greatly benefit the existing industries in Elbert County and the Northeast Georgia region. Our economic base in Elbert County is the granite quarrying and manufacturing industry, and this rail connection would enable our existing companies to reduce freight costs and to expand into additional markets.

Project managers and industry leaders contend that rail access is becoming increasingly attractive to companies in their importing and exporting of goods. As fuel prices fluctuate, shipping by truck is not always cost-effective and efficient. For the reasons articulated in this letter, the Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman is supportive of this effort by the Hartwell Railroad to improve rail access to existing and prospective industries in our region.

PO Box 63
Elberton, GA 30635

The Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman does not administer permits or approvals. However, the scope of this project may fall within the permitting jurisdiction of the City of Elberton and Elbert County Code Enforcement.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 706-213-7600.

Best Regards,

Beth Eavenson

Beth Eavenson
Executive Director
Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman

Thomas A. Denny

Tom Denny
Chairman
Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman

cc: Mr. Bennie Ray Anderson, Hartwell Railroad Company

PO Box 63
Elberton, GA 30335