

FD-36137

City of Fishers, City of Noblesville, and Hamilton County, Indiana

John A Williams

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ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
October 11, 2017
Part of
Public Record

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am a resident of Noblesville, Indiana wishing to express opposition to the proposed rail-banking and interim trail use of the subject railroad line from milepost I-2.13 at Indianapolis, Indiana, to milepost I-39.69 at Tipton, Indiana.

There are only two direct automobile routes from Fishers and Noblesville into Indianapolis: the State Road 37 / Interstate 69 corridor and Allisonville Road, a non-limited access road that goes through largely developed sections of Fishers that would be costly and difficult to add significant capacity.

Beginning next year, a five-year project to upgrade and reconstruct portions of the State Road 37 / Interstate 69 (including its junction with Interstate 465) begins which will likely create significant increases to travel times during this extended construction period. The increased travel times are apt to remain once construction completes, even with additional capacity and efficiencies, due to rapid growth in the population of southeastern Hamilton County and new business attracting people from the region.

As a person who works in downtown Indianapolis, I have seen my commute time increase by over 50% over the past ten-years. The cumulative impact of these commuter times wastes fuel and increases air pollution.

The leaders of the City of Fishers, the City of Noblesville and Hamilton County do not appear to consider these facts in their request to rail-bank the line between Indianapolis and Noblesville and convert it into a recreational trail. Instead, due to a lack of realistic alternatives for additional direct automobile routes between these cities and Indianapolis, these governments need to develop the rail line into a commuter option to provide relief to the automobile routes during construction and as traffic counts continue to increase over the coming years. It is also very reasonable that the commuter train option will also allow the continuation of the historic train presence in the area that many citizens in this

region value. Other options for a recreational trail between Fishers and Noblesville exist that do not require the conversion of the rail line.

The estimated conversion cost of \$10-15M, cited by these governments to convert the rail line to a trail, will be wasted once it is finally realized that the line needs to be used as a major transportation option.

I request that the Surface Transportation Board deny the request by these governments so that more thoughtful planning over a longer duration can occur that provides citizens of this region with better transportation alternatives without unnecessarily spending money in the interim period.

Best Regards,

John A. Williams

Signature /s/ John Williams

Date_____11 October 2017