

September 13, 2021

EI-31287

TO: Surface Transportation Board

From: Mary Hurley, Eureka, CA

RE: Docket AB 1305 X Public Comment

A current proposal for a corporation is in play to purchase the Northwestern Pacific rail line. This will allow a transportation route to the Pacific Ocean to ship coal from the Midwest to Asia. It is imperative that this should not happen for the following reasons:

- Fossil fuels need to remain in the ground to stop the current devastating effects of climate change.
- Shipping coal has additional significant environmental and public health risks.
- The Northwestern Pacific rail line passes through segments in Humboldt and Mendocino counties that have proven unstable geology to support a viable rail line.
- The alternative plan that has been in place for years now allows for rail banking and a Great Redwood trail through the region from Humboldt to Sonoma counties. This plan will improve the economies of communities in these areas from tourism rather than increasing adverse climate changes.

I strongly urge this Board to set a timeline to complete the rail banking process. Please keep in mind it is not necessary to pause the larger rail banking process to confirm the legal status of two terminal segments of the farthest reaches of the rail line.

With the current crisis in California of both long term drought and continued acceleration of wildfires due in large part to climate changes, we need our government set policies to protect further carbon going into the atmosphere now. You must take action on this.

Thank you.