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RE: Ex Parte 753-Petition for Rulemaking

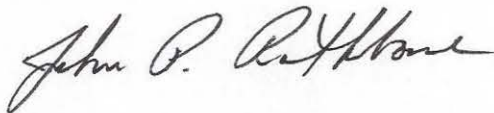
Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Ms. Brown,

I am writing in support of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) petition to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) "to establish a one-year period for any initial interim trail use negotiating period and codify the Board's authority to grant extensions of the negotiating period for good cause shown".

I am currently a board member of RTC and previously served as chief financial officer for Norfolk Southern, a Class 1 railroad serving the eastern United States. I have seen railbanking negotiations from both sides. They are complex and time consuming. The goal is to preserve rail corridors for future rail use, with interim public use as recreational trails. The loss of these corridors would be a loss to future generations. Allowing adequate time to negotiate these complex deals is exactly what the Ex Parte 753 requests, and would help insure the preservation of these rail lines. I support this petition.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John P. Rathbone".

John P. Rathbone