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Railbanking Rule Change

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Humboldt Trails Council

On behalf of the Humboldt Trails Council (HTC) I am writing to the Board to file our objection to the proposed change to the Railbanking rules to limit extensions to 3 years.

HTC is involved in a very complex 300-mile rail-to-trail conversion from Humboldt Bay to SF Bay that involves a state agency that holds the existing railroad authority and is close to 9 million in debt, as well as a private railroad operator. The law to begin this conversion was just signed by the Governor, and the request for Railbanking has not yet been filed with the STB.

HTC can easily imagine that once the STB filing is made that the process could take longer than 3 years. However, saving this corridor for the future of the North Coast of CA is seen as essential to all parties, who may not agree on much else, except for a few reversionary landowners interested in personal gain.

It is clear that NARPO's intent is to thwart the original Railbanking Legislation to increase personal profits for its members, at the expense of protecting rail corridors for local communities and the future of our country.

If the STB finds it necessary to put a limit on the number of years that extensions can be filed for its own purposes, HTC requests the Board consider a longer term like 6 years so that critically important conversions like the one we are working on do not fall for the benefit of a few landowners.

Thank you for your consideration, Bruce Silvey, Humboldt Trails Council