



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: October 19, 2021

Item Number: _____

Resolution Number: _____

☐ 4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California,

Whereas, the North Coast Railroad Authority has recently sought permission from the United States Surface Transportation Board to abandon failed, unused rail segments between Willits and Humboldt County and railbank the segment, allowing for the development of the Great Railroad Trail; and

Whereas, a North Coast Railroad Company (NCRC), a company based in Wyoming, the principals of which have not been made public, has recently submitted paperwork to the Surface Transportation Board objecting to the exemption of the railbanking request from certain challenges, stating its intent to purchase the railroad; and

Whereas, the proposed use has been widely reported and corroborated to be for the transportation of coal that is mined in the Midwest; and

Whereas, it is presumed that this company intends to transport this coal across the state of California to Marin County and then haul it north through Sonoma, Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt counties to the port of Humboldt; and

Whereas, coal is the biggest contributor to climate change; and

Whereas, according to a 2015 study, between five hundred and two thousand pounds of coal and coal dust can escape from every single loaded train car; and

Whereas, coal dust can cause devastating disease in humans and animals, cause

spontaneous fires, and degrade and destabilize the rail bed; and

Whereas, the Russian and Eel Rivers supply drinking water to nearly one-million people in Northern California, and habitat to numerous threatened and endangered species; and

Whereas, the North Coast Rail line has been shut down for over twenty years having been built on unstable ground, leading to erosion, landslides and washouts on a regular basis, in which segments through the canyon are simply gone, leaving the tracks hanging in the air high above the Eel River, with the necessary repairs widely regarded as cost prohibitive; and

Whereas, the Great Redwood Trail will create a destination for our local communities and attract outdoor enthusiasts, boosting our regional economy and creating the longest continuous railbanked segment in America.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved the County of Sonoma hereby notifies the Surface Transportation Board of our strong support for the North Coast Railroad Authority's request for exemption from offers for financial assistance filed in AB 1305x, and opposition to the acceptance of any offer of financial assistance with respect to the segment proposed to be railbanked; and

Be It Further Resolved the County of Sonoma encourages the Surface Transportation Board to grant the request of the North Coast Railroad Authority to railbank their rail line from Willits to Humboldt Bay.

Supervisors:

Gorin:

Rabbitt:

Coursey:

Gore:

Hopkins:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

So Ordered.