



March 22, 2018

Senator Mike McGuire
1036 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501
via email: robert.christensen@sen.ca.gov

Dear Senator McGuire:

We are writing to register our strong support for Senate Bill 1029, the Great Redwood Trail Act, and to thank you for introducing it. This is a visionary and transformative bill which, if enacted, will have a substantial positive impact on the economy and environment of the North Coast. We particularly support and appreciate the following aspects of the bill:

- **Multi-use trail.** The bill's current language specifies that the Great Redwood Trail should be a "hiking, biking and riding trail." Multi-use trails not only draw more recreational users—both tourists and locals—they also lend themselves to use for commuting and other practical transportation purposes. In the North Coast's rural areas in particular, opportunities like this to decrease greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation and increase quality of life are critically important.
- **Trail network.** The fact that the bill calls not only for a single trail, but rather for a trail network incorporating "any associated branch or spur lines," is particularly important and will help ensure the new infrastructure's accessibility and usefulness to both residents and tourists.
- **Prioritizing trail use.** The bill as written specifies that any freight or excursion rail service on the northernmost segment of the rail line "shall not interfere with or harm the agency's trail." This language is critical. We do not oppose the use of parts of the rail line for freight or passenger train service. In fact, under many circumstances we would strongly support such service, as it is well established that rail transportation generally is more fuel efficient and produces lower greenhouse gas emissions per ton-mile or passenger-mile than cars or trucks. However, this bill appropriately reflects the unfortunate fact that rail service is not currently environmentally or economically feasible on most of the rail line north of Willits, while use of the right of way for trails is not only feasible but highly desirable.

We submit the following as comments for your consideration regarding how the language of the bill may potentially be strengthened:

- You may wish to consider incorporating a *requirement* that the Great Redwood Trail be a multi-use trail wherever feasible into proposed Public Resources Code Section 5885, rather than referencing multiple uses only in the legislative intent section of the bill.
- We also suggest that you consider incorporating into Section 4 or Section 6 of the bill a *requirement* that the North Coast Railroad Authority's successor agency for the southern part of



its line construct and maintain a trail on or next to its right of way, rather than referencing the goal of a trail system on this part of the line only in the legislative intent section of the bill.

- We are confident that you have given careful consideration to the costs of implementing the bill, and we appreciate the process for reimbursing state-mandated local costs referenced in Section 7 of the bill. Furthermore, we recognize the difficulty of creating new funding sources through legislation. However, we do suggest that you consider identifying more specific funding sources for trail construction and maintenance. For example, it may be helpful to clarify that the Great Redwood Trail Agency will be eligible for state Active Transportation Program funds. It may also be useful to consider non-traditional funding sources, such as requiring the NCRA's successor agency for the southern part of its line to devote a portion of any revenues from freight or excursion train operations to trail construction and/or maintenance.

CRTP is the only non-governmental organization in Humboldt County focused entirely on promoting a comprehensive shift to more environment- and community-friendly modes of transportation. As such, if you should have any questions, comments or need of our support as you move forward with SB 1029, we offer ourselves as a resource.

Thank you again for introducing this wonderful bill, and for all of your efforts on behalf of the North Coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Fiske', written in a cursive style.

Colin Fiske
Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP)
colin@transportationpriorities.org