

RESOLUTION NO. RES-2021-170

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA URGING THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD TO: (1) REJECT THE APPLICATION SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH COAST RAIL COMPANY, LLC TO ACQUIRE AND REHABILITATE THE NORTH COAST RAIL AUTHORITY'S RAIL LINE BETWEEN EUREKA AND WILLITS FOR THE PURPOSES OF "HIGH-VOLUME SHIPMENTS," AND (2) GRANT THE REQUEST OF THE NORTH COAST RAIL AUTHORITY TO RAILBANK ITS RAIL LINE FROM WILLITS TO HUMBOLDT BAY

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2021, the North Coast Rail Authority ("NCRA") filed a petition seeking the Surface Transportation Board's permission to abandon a 175.4-mile portion of rail line in favor of creating the Great Redwood Trail, a multi-use pathway extending 320 miles along the agency's right of way; and

WHEREAS, the section of rail line that NCRA filed to abandon was closed by federal safety officials after destructive rainstorms in 1998 washed out hillsides and collapsed tunnels and repair estimates are approximately \$2.8 billion; and

WHEREAS, on August 16, 2021, a newly formed corporation named the North Coast Railroad Company LLC ("NCRCo") filed a pleading with the Surface Transportation Board representing that the corporation is ready to make an "Offer of Financial Assistance" to acquire and rehabilitate the NCRA's rail line between Eureka and Willits for the purposes of "high-volume shipments;" and

WHEREAS, it is widely believed that NCRCo is intending to use the railroad to transport coal mined in the Midwest 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, according to railroad studies, somewhere between five hundred to two thousand pounds of coal and coal dust can escape from every single loaded train car carrying coal and coal can cause devastating impacts to drinking water, watersheds, and the surrounding environment; and

WHEREAS, the NCRCo proposal would transport coal along the Russian and Eel rivers which supply drinking water to nearly one-million people of Northern California and are a habitat for numerous threatened and endangered species; and

WHEREAS, the transportation of coal through California, through Sonoma County and through Santa Rosa is inconsistent with the strongly stated goals of the State of California, the County of Sonoma and the City of Santa Rosa to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the use of fossil fuels.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Santa Rosa hereby urges the Surface Transportation Board to reject the application submitted on behalf of

the North Coast Rail Company LLC for authorization to acquire and rehabilitate the NRCA’s rail line between Eureka and Willits for the transport of “high volume shipments.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges the Surface Transportation Board to grant the request of the North Coast Rail Authority to railbank its rail line from Willits to Humboldt Bay to allow for the creation the Great Redwood Trail, a 320 mile multi-use trail.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED this 12th day of October, 2021.

AYES: (6) Mayor C. Rogers, Council Members Alvarez, Fleming, Sawyer, Schwedhelm, Tibbetts

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice Mayor N. Rogers

ABSTAIN: (0)

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney