

Dear

NC Durham-to-Roxboro Rail Trail Plan - September 2025

Under NC law, the Railroad would not be authorized to place a public recreational trail that was originally granted for Railroad purposes only. However, the Federal "Trails Act" law cancels out the NC State law, which means that new easements can be imposed on private property for trail use. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to request that State and Federal approvals and funds for the Durham to Roxboro Trail be withdrawn.

I am opposed to the Rail to Trail linking Durham to Roxboro for the following reasons:

- 1 The **dishonest Grant Study** dated September 21, 2023 and sent to Washington DC by the City of Durham and approved by Secretary Pete Buttigieg in the U.S. Department of Transportation, contained **false information** for the request of Federal Funds for the Rail to Trail Project. The project has never been a **local community** led initiative but instead proposed by government organizations. The thousands of citizens who live on or in close proximity to the projected Rail to Trail are outraged that a decision for the project has been approved without consent by the landowners directly affected. Residents living within a five (5) mile radius of the railroad were not contacted directly.
- 2 **Opposition to the trail due to Environmental Hazards** of the soil and water for the residents of Durham and Person County because of the toxic waste, which contains lead, arsenic, and heavy metals because of the disturbance and removal of the abandoned railroad timbers and steel. These life-threatening issues will affect humans, wildlife, trees, woodlands, and wetlands which includes rivers and streams.
- 3 The **dangers placed on the Ecosystem**, which includes forests, lakes, ponds and many rivers and streams that flow into the Neuse River basin poses harm through flooding and environmental diseases. The removal of the old railroad timbers, the imperious surface violations, and the destruction of the mature hardwood trees can cause drainage and irreversible destruction. The removal of groups of long-standing trees harms the remaining trees through root disruption, increased heat, and many other issues that also affect birds and other wildlife.
- 4 The **violation of the habitats** for many animals, plants, birds, reptiles and aquatic life which live along the twenty six (26) mile forested rail road track is unconscionable. The removal of the mature forests, railroad timbers, and railroad steel - for no real purpose - risks the habitats of many wildlife species that are treasured in North Carolina.
- 5 The **lack of acknowledgment of the history of the Sappony Indians** of Person County who also resided in North Durham. The Sappony Indians lived, hunted, and fished along the abandoned railroad tracks between Durham and Roxboro. Artifacts of the Sappony Indians are found in the fields and woods adjacent to the unused railroad tracks.
- 6 The **destruction of the private property** of thousands of land owners adjacent to the unused railroad tracks that are barely visible due to the growth of mature trees and woodlands is appalling. Land owners have not been involved or adequately informed about the trail or the resulting property damage. Also **crime statistics** reported on Durham City websites reinforces the potential risk of safety on the trail, which will be difficult to monitor by law enforcement.
- 7 **Solution: Stop immediately** any future project on the Rail to Trail linking Durham and Roxboro.
Alternate Option: Create a new and different trail (**The 501 Trail**), exercise path, and bike trail along the side of the existing 15-501 Highway linking Durham and Person Counties. The 501 Trail would have places for parking, picnic areas, bike rental stations, restrooms, watering stations, and decrease safety concerns about motorized ATV's vehicles and could be better monitored by law enforcement, police, fire, and ambulances who have lifesaving equipment – including AED cardiac devices. The 501 Trail could be monitored on a twenty four (24) hour basis. This new better option is more cost effective, safer, less invasive, more environmentally friendly, and would save the NC tax payers millions of dollars for maintenance, trash removal, and repairs.

Thank you so much for understanding my concerns as a citizen of North Carolina, USA. Here is my contact information.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____