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E1-843

October 28, 2003

Kevin M. Seals  
Project Manager  
Hanson Professional Services Inc.  
Springfield, IL 62703

**Re: Request for comments/consultation on proposed construction of 1,800 ft of connecting track and abandonment of 7.5 miles of existing track in Peoria County, Illinois**

Dear Mr. Seals,

In your letter we received on September 15<sup>th</sup>, we were notified that the Peoria, Peoria Heights, and Western Railroad (PPHW) would like to abandon approximately 7.5 miles of the existing Keller Branch rail line. If this abandonment is approved, the end result would be the creation of a recreational trail. Furthermore, this trail would connect the Pimetoui Trail with the Rock Island Trail. We would like to express our support for the creation of this recreational trail.

The existing Keller Branch rail line is an integral link in completing the overall Rock Island State Trail. This link will not only improve the region's recreational capabilities, but will also enhance the region's quality of life. This quality of life translates to economic development in attracting people to the area. Housing has also proven to benefit from nearby trails; property values are consistently higher for housing near trails.

Please know that the Peoria/Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS) fully supports this undertaking. This is an excellent opportunity for not only the City of Peoria, but for all of the surrounding communities that will benefit the recreational opportunities the trail will offer. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Transportation Planner, Joshua Barbée, at 673-9796, x223.

Sincerely,

Earl Carter  
Chair, PPUATS Policy Committee

Cc: Steve Van Winkle, City of Peoria

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