



El Dorado County

James R. "Jack" Sweeney
Supervisor, District III

Date: August 15, 2011

To: Board of Supervisors

RE: Item #23, 24, 25 & 37 on 8/16/11 – Rails/Trails

On Sunday, July 31, 2011, about 40 of us boarded the Skagit and six speeders at the Hampton Inn stop in Folsom. We rode out to Latrobe and had a delightful breakfast with that community. We then carried on to a point known as the "gap" which is south of the Barnett Business Park and just west of the intersection with Shingle Lime Mine Road. This was a delightful and exhilarating voyage on a train. Only my imagination can bring to mind the opportunities for an excursion train from the Old Sacramento Rail Road Museum and the many great experiences that could be enjoyed by people that would not otherwise come to our great and historic County; after all, we are the true birthplace of our great state.

But, unfortunately, we are embarking on the political assassination of a part of our very history; that would be the removal of portions of the track so that a group of cyclists and hikers can have a place constructed and maintained for them by taxpayer dollars.

Remember, that while no effort was made to create any semblance of trails, the train people were maintaining (at no cost to the taxpayers) the very property that the trails people would now have this county destroy, reconstruct as a trail, and maintain all at taxpayer expense. And during this time we spent \$8 million plus from Missouri Flat Road east for trails. Had we spent half of that on rails we would have an excursion train!

Since trains can only go on certain grades, why not look at spending like amounts of money at other locations for the trails? Such locations would not need to be 10 to 15 miles from where the users are located and would, therefore, receive greater usage. We should at least look at this alternative BEFORE we destroy our historic railroad and our heritage.

Having worked diligently for years to beat Southern Pacific and to obtain this right-of-way for multi-use (think sharing) I PLEAD WITH THIS BOARD to consider other opportunities to provide trails rather than destroying what some can use today and what very well could be an incubator for tourism in this county.