

Hoosier Heritage Port Authority

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Transmitted Via Fax

March 21, 1996

Indiana Department of Transportation
Debra Simmons-Wilson, Deputy Commissioner
100 N. Senate Room N 755
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Ms. Simmons-Wilson:

In 1994 INDOT awarded a TEA grant jointly to the Town of Fishers and the City of Noblesville for \$1,250,000.00 to purchase and improve the Historic Nickel Plate Railroad line. The line runs from 10th Street in Indianapolis to Tipton, Indiana (approximately 37.5 miles) and connects to the Indiana State Fair, Conner Prairie, Ritchey Woods and other significant attractions. **It is our intent to use this line to primarily operate historic and recreational trains on the railroad.**

In June of 1995, we successfully closed on the sale of the line with the Norfolk and Southern Corporation and purchased the line for \$1,000,00.00 with \$800,000.00 in TEA funds and \$200,000.00 in local matching funds. We are now ready to utilize the remaining \$250,000.00 allocation from our grant (\$200,000.00 TEA funds and \$50,000.00 local match) to finish corridor improvements required to make the line operational for the 1996 season.

These improvements are necessary because of Federal Railroad Administration defects that currently exist on the line. The improvements consist of new signal, corridor crossing, and railroad tie construction. Attached is a project and cost summary of the corridor improvements to be completed. It is our intent to have these corridor improvements finished in time for the Indiana Transportation Museum to begin their excursion trains this spring. The requested improvements are almost exactly the same as those recently approved by INDOT for the Whitewater Valley Historic Railroad with TEA funds.

Once the City of Noblesville and the Town of Fishers purchased the railroad they formed a multijurisdictional port authority called the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority. The Hoosier Heritage Port Authority consists of a six member board, three members appointed by each community and an executive director. The Hoosier Heritage Port Authority is responsible for overseeing operations of the railroad and issuing license agreements to utilities crossing or occupying the R-O-W. It is this body which will be utilizing the remaining TEA funds and has raised the necessary local matching funds.

Recently, Dennis Blind, the President of Hoosier Heritage Port Authority, and I met with Bruno Canzian and Rich Emery about accessing the remaining TEA funds allocated for this project and they indicated that a letter to you outlining our request would be the appropriate action to take. We are very excited about the prospects for a successful historic railroad operation on the Nickel Plate line and look forward to your response. We stand ready to cooperate with INDOT in any way possible to facilitate this request and get the trains moving this spring.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Larry Hopkins
Executive Director
Hoosier Heritage Port Authority

CC: Bruno Canzian
Rich Emery