



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

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State Council, Chair
Taconic Region, Chair

April 14, 2016

Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation
U.S Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I am writing in support of the Dutchess County and Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association's (HVRTA) application to complete the eight-mile trail connection between the Village of Millerton and Under Mountain Road in the Town of Ancram; the tunnel crossing of State Route 22 at the intersection of State Route 22 and Orphan Farm Rd. (Copake Falls); and three pedestrian bridges to connect to the trail at Black Grocery Rd. in Copake. These three components will finish approximately 28 miles of trail from Wassaic (Dutchess County) to Hillsdale (Columbia County), linking to New York City via Metro North Railroad. Upon completion the entire trail will be 46 miles in length.

This project will join two counties, NY State Parks, and a not for profit in a project that will become a destination for thousands of people from near and afar. In particular this grant will have a huge positive impact on Taconic State Park, the south Taconic Trail and, particularly, Rudd Pond campground, day use and swimming area. Located near Millerton, New York, a new rail trail extension would greatly expand the utility of Rudd Pond as a southern base camp for exploring Taconic State Park by using mass transit. This connection will allow bikers and hikers alike to utilize the Metro North Station in Wassaic and directly connect to all of Taconic State Park, including northern parts of the park which include the 5.2 miles of already paved and maintained rail trail, Copake Falls 106 site campground, 18 cabin and cottages, 18 plus miles of hiking trails, the historic Copake Ironworks and the NY Trailhead to Bash Bish Falls.

I am hopeful that the you and the review committee will consider a grant for the Dutchess County and Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association to aid them in improving this important "connection" and economic driver in eastern Dutchess and Columbia Counties. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Linda G. Cooper
Taconic Regional Director