PETITION to have the Ulster County Legislature designate the U&D Corridor from Stony Hollow to the Ashokan Reservoir as "Rail-with-Trail".

We the undersigned residents of Ulster County, hereby submit this petition to the Ulster County Legislature, the Ulster County Executive, and the Housing and Transportation Committee of the Ulster County Legislature.

Statement of Concern

The Housing and Transportation Committee of the Ulster County Legislature will soon adopt a resolution on the final status of the Undesignated segment of the County-owned Ulster and Delaware Railroad Corridor between Stony Hollow and the Ashokan Reservoir. Their choices are "Rail-only", "Trail-only" and "Rail-with-Trail".

The Committee is basing this determination solely on a study done by Barton & Loguidice a well-known trail consultant. The study overdesigned the "Rail-with-Trail" option by nearly doubling the width of the trail from acceptable minimums causing the final cost estimates for this scenario to be highly inflated. The CMRR asked the Consultant to provide a revised set of cost estimates based on narrower trail width but this was not produced, and a viable alternate route for the trail was not considered.

The original scope of the study included a cost/benefit analysis, but the benefit part was dropped. Without analyzing the benefits of the extension of the railroad to Basin Road, and given the inflated RWT costs, the H&T Committee will likely select "Trail-only".

If the H&T Committee selects "Trail-Only" the result will be removal of the railroad from Stony Hollow to Basin Road, the denial of the extension to the reservoir, and an attempt to terminate the CMRR at a highly inferior location that will only result in a "train to nowhere". Extending the Ashokan Rail Trail to Stony Hollow will result in a "trail to nowhere" that serves no purpose.

Request

We respectfully request that the Ulster County Legislature and Housing and Transportation committee select "Rail-with-Trail" as the final designation for the U&D Railroad Corridor from Stony Hollow to Basin Road. We also respectfully request the extension of the CMRR's permit to Basin Road, the release of the $4.5 million of grants the CMRR has already obtained that the County is blocking including $667,000 for the new terminal at Basin Road. Finally, we ask the County to fully support future CMRR grants applications and rail operations from Kingston to the Ashokan Reservoir and its planned Trolley operations to West Hurley and Woodstock.

Petitioners

By signing below, we affirm that we are residents of Ulster County and support this petition.

	Printed Name	Address	Signature	Date
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Statement of Witness:

I, _____ affirm that I personally witnessed the above-named parties sign this document on

(Signature of Witness)

_____ (date), and am willing to confirm this if requested.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) **What is the Economic Benefit to Ulster County of Extending the CMRR to Basin Road?**

   By creating a multimodal attraction that enhances both the Ashokan Rail Trail and the Railroad, combined with a Trolley, the CMRR estimates that with the extension it will increase its 2025 ridership of 61,677 (52,062 or 84.4% are visitors) by 25,000. It will also increase its current $834,000 payroll (3 full-time employees, 36 part time and 118 seasonal), current $558,000 of expenditures in Ulster County and $10.3 million current economic impact by 40%. This will increase its economic impact on Ulster County businesses by $4.5 million to $14.8 million per year. See this link:

   https://catskillmountainrailroad.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/CMRR-Economic-Impact-2025.pdf

2) **Why do you believe you can increase your ridership by 25,000 by extending the railroad to Basin Road?**
   Only 12% of the Ashokan Rail Trail users are visitors, or about 16,700. We believe this can be increased by 15,000 by offering bike rentals, indoor bathrooms, and small food concessions to the CMRR's out-of-town riders who usually don't bring bikes with them. The addition of indoor bathrooms will allow the Ashokan Rail Trail and the CMRR to be listed on the "Attractions" signs on the New York State Thruway. An additional 10,000 riders are expected to take the "Woodstock Express" that will transport passengers by rail to West Hurley and by Trolley to West Hurley and Woodstock. This is similar to the Kaaterskill Trolley in Greene County. It will enable the CMRR to provide public transit in Ulster County.

3) **Parks and Trails New York, a trail advocacy group, recently published a report that says the Empire State Trail produced $74 million of economic benefits to Ulster County. Is that true?**

   No, it is not. The report assumed 398,177 users of whom 74,411 are visitors. They used $544 per visitor and $19.61 per resident spending estimates compared to an average of $93 that the CMRR assumes for visitors and zero for residents. Using the CMRR's methodology the economic impact of the Empire State Trail is about the same as the CMRR.

4) **How are the Rail with Trail costs exaggerated in the Barton and Loguidice Report?**
   The report assumes a trail width of 14 feet – a 10 feet wide trail with two 2-foot shoulders on each side as well as a four-foot ditch. They mention on page 28 of their report that an 8-foot-wide trail is acceptable, but did not use that in their calculations. Reducing the width of the trail to 8 feet with a 2-foot ditch reduces the RWT cost by over 75%. An alternate route for the trail along Basin Road and Route 28A, which now meets Empire State Trail standards, was not reviewed.

5) **Who will pay for the CMRR Track Extension**? The CMRR will pay 100% of the track extension.

6) **Who will pay for the Rail and Trail Terminal at Basin Road?** The CMRR and NYSDOT though a $667,000 grant.

7) **Who will pay for the new Trolley Service to West Hurley and Woodstock?** The CMRR.

8) **How can the Costs of "Rail-with-Trail" be paid for?** The CMRR has railroad grant opportunities that need the County's cooperation to pursue. The CMRR applied for a RWT grant in 2025 but the County denied their support.

9) **Why are the Woodstock Land Conservancy and the Friends of the Catskill Mountain Rail Trail so opposed to "Rail-with-Trail"?** We do not know. However, you can read their position on their website devoted to Trail-only between Kingston and the Ashokan Reservoir at https://katrail.org/

10) **What will happen if the H&T Committee selects "Trail-Only"?** With the concept of Rail-with-Trail defeated, the CMRR expects the rest of the railroad to be converted to a trail after the end of its current permit in 2028. That will be the only way to satisfy the goals of the WLC and CMRT.

11) **Which Legislators are on the Ulster County Housing & Transportation Committee?** Chair Debra Clinton, Deputy Chair Jason Kovacs, Legislators Mike Berardi, Lindsey Grossman, Greg McCollough, Dominick Marino, and Megan Sperry.

12) **Where should I send my completed petition?** Return completed petitions to the CMRR at PO Box 1415, Kingston, NY 12402-1415