



January 24, 2020

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Darin Bergquist, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Transportation  
700 E Broadway Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Mr. Bergquist,

I am the Race Director of the Deadwood Mickelson Trail Marathon and Run Crazy Horse. Both are events held on the George S. Mickelson Trail. Between the 2 events, we host approximately 4500 runner's annually from nearly every state and several countries. These events bring about \$4.5 million in economic impact to the Black Hills each year. I am also a Board Member of Black Hills Trails. Black Hills Trails has successfully partnered with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, County of Meade, and the cities of Sturgis, Spearfish, and Whitewood to complete new trail construction and sustainable maintenance projects over the past 5 years.

I am writing in support of the City of Rapid City's proposal to convert the rail bed between Rapid City and Kadoka into a recreation trail. I believe this rail bed would be a great addition to our Black Hills Trails systems as it would be a valuable resource to Rapid City and connected communities.

- Trails boost economic development and the desirability and value of homes and communities
- Trails improve public safety and quality of previously abandoned areas by increasing traffic and regular monitoring
- Building trails close to urban areas helps people make walking and biking a fun and regular part of their lifestyle and can help reduce obesity and stress.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my strong support for the project alongside all of the governmental and advocacy partners. I also look forward to producing events on the new trail that will bring new visitors into our State each year. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Wheeler

Race Director, Deadwood Mickelson Trail Marathon and Run Crazy Horse

Black Hills Trails Board Member