



August 29, 2023

Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Secretary Miller,

I am writing to express our support for the Shenandoah Rail Trail project and to encourage the Commonwealth to acquire the corridor for the purpose of developing the trail.

P.O. Box 1862
Williamsburg, Virginia 23187
757-378-5462

CivilWarTrails.org

Our organization has been working with community leaders, descendant organizations, municipal and state travel offices since 1994 to connect visitors from around the world with historic sites across six states, including those in the Shenandoah Valley. As our travelers grow younger and become more adventurous the ability to have them 'bicycle the battle' will not only engage them with cultural resources in a new way but keep them in-market longer, increasing patronage for local businesses, benefiting municipal tax bases, and will encourage the conservation of and further development of Civil War tourism amenities.

The corridor itself is historic and many of our sites are already along the proposed route. We understand from a recent economic impact study that the Rail Trail, when complete, will attract a projected 750,000 visitors annually. With our average travel party spending just over \$1,000 per trip the value to communities along the corridor will be noticeable.

Prior to penning this letter of support we contacted each of our partners in the region. The region's representative on the Civil War Trails® board encouraged our support and we understand this is also consistent with the overwhelming support from the majority of local governments in the project's scope.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I can provide further information about our support. Thank you for your consideration and your service to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

