

Fitness Owner Calls for Trail Funding

Written by Steve Frank
Friday, 07 June 2013 10:04

Dear Senator Soucek,

My name is Zika Rea and my husband Pete and I are the owners of ZAP Fitness, a retreat center in Blowing Rock which focuses on long distance running, cycling and outdoor recreation. I hope you will give me a few minutes of your time. I am writing you specifically about NC Senate Bill 402 and NC House Bill 817,

which, as I am sure you are aware, will cut roughly 1.2 million dollars in state funding for DOT projects that affects greenways and trails. This funding cut will cause NC to lose roughly 4.5 million dollars in federal DOT distribution.

For those of us here in the High Country Senator Soucek, Watauga County has secured 1 million dollars to help fund the proposed South Fork Greenway (from Boone to Todd) and the Middle Fork Greenway (Boone to Blowing Rock). 20% of that 1 million dollars is state money which allows us to be eligible for the remaining 80% of federal money.

Tomorrow (6/7) the House Transportation Committee will produce their budget. If this 200k is not within the budget, both of these projects run the risk of failure. Senator Soucek I know you know the High Country well. Our future business engine needs green tourism. Boone and Blowing Rock are increasingly becoming meccas for outdoor recreation; however, safe venues for cycling and running are in short supply. These greenways, already in the implementation stages, will create an effective stream of new tourism dollars for the High Country with virtually no negative impact on the natural resources of our unique environment. Additionally new greenway space will give the more than 2 million annual visitors to the High Country access to safe places to exercise with their families. At a time when obesity, particularly childhood obesity, is at epidemic levels, we feel quality venues for recreation need to be put in the forefront of our priorities. Senator, on behalf of all of the cyclists, walkers, runners and parents who desire safe places for our residents to recreate, we implore you to vote against any reduction or elimination of state DOT funding.

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I appreciate your time and thank you for listening to my concerns.

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