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SERVICE DATE - FEBRUARY 10, 1998  
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-312 (SUB-NO. 2X)

South Carolina Central Railroad Company, Inc.  
D/b/a Carolina Piedmont Division  
-- Abandonment Exemption --  
In Greenville County, SC

### BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the South Carolina Central Railroad Company, Inc., d/b/a Carolina Piedmont Division (CPDR) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of its railroad line located between (1) milepost AJK 585.34 in East Greenville and milepost AJK 588.63 in Greenville, and (2) milepost 0.0 and 2.0 in Greenville, a distance of 5.29 miles in Greenville County, SC. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

Boral Brick Company is the only active shipper located on the southern segment of the line (MP 585.34 to 588.63). Since 1992, Boral has received the following number of carloads of brick: 50 carloads (1992); 65 (1993); 65 (1994); 34 (1995); 37 (1996); 60 (1997 through November). Alternative motor carrier service is available, and Boral currently uses trucks for 95 percent of its shipping needs. No train operations have been conducted over the northern segment (MP 0.0 to 2.0) since 1993 because one of the bridges is partially washed out and the line is in poor condition.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local

agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Geodetic Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

#### **CONDITIONS**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) identified 2 geodetic station markers along the rail line that may be affected by the proposed abandonment and requests 90 days notice to plan relocation of any markers which may be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **South Carolina Central Railroad Company, Inc., d/b/a Carolina Piedmont Division (CPDR) shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey and provide NGS with 90 days notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers.**

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, and subject to the recommended condition, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

#### **PUBLIC USE**

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

#### **TRAILS USE**

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

#### **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

#### **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Mike Dalton, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB- 312 (Sub No. 2X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Mike Dalton at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: February 10, 1998.

**Comment due date: March 12, 1998.**

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary