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SEA

SERVICE DATE – APRIL 21, 2008

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**STB Docket No. AB-43 (Sub-No. 183X)**

**Illinois Central Railroad Company – Abandonment Exemption –  
in Dyer County, TN**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a line of railroad in Dyer County, Tennessee. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 1.01 miles from milepost 48.51 to milepost 47.50 (the Line). A map depicting the Line in relationship to the area served is appended to this Environmental Assessment (EA). If the notice 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**

According to IC, the Line was formerly owned by the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad and ran from Bemis, TN northwest to Dyersburg, TN. Aside from serving Roellen Gin, Co., there were no industries served until milepost 47.5 at Dyersburg, where a spur track served Thomas Industries. Dyersburg was also where the Hickman District connected to the Fulton District. IC also states that there are two bridges located within the area of the proposed abandonment. Each bridge is a timber structure, constructed in the 1930s, and rebuilt in 1971.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

IC 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. IC served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's (Board) environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)].<sup>1</sup> The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

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<sup>1</sup> The railroad's environmental and historic reports are available for viewing on the Board's website at [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov) by going to "E-Library," selecting "Filings," and then conducting a search for AB-43 (Sub-No. 183X).

### *Diversion of Traffic*

According to IC, no local traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years, and there is no overhead traffic to be rerouted. Accordingly, the proposed abandonment would not adversely impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities; transportation of ozone-depleting materials; or result in the diversion of rail traffic to truck traffic that could result in significant impacts to air quality or the local transportation network.

### *Salvage Activities*

Impacts from salvage and disposal of a rail line typically include removal of tracks and ties, removal of ballast, dismantling of any bridges or other structures that may be present on the rail right-of-way, and regrading of the right-of-way. Salvage may be performed within the right-of-way, or, if necessary, via the construction of new access points to the right-of-way.

IC states that it intends to salvage rail, ties and track materials from the Line. IC also indicates that two bridges and three grade crossings (two private and one public) would be removed in connection with the proposed abandonment. IC states that precautions would be taken to ensure public safety during any salvage operations.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDT) stated that, based on the assumption that the abandonment would cause no ground disturbance, TDT sees no potential adverse effects from the proposed abandonment.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service commented that no significant adverse impacts to wetlands or Federally listed endangered or threatened species are anticipated from the proposed abandonment. Therefore, no further consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is required.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) stated that because the proposed abandonment deals with a specific issue in Tennessee, it has transferred IC's letter to the USEPA, Region 4 regional office. IC indicates that it also contacted USEPA, Region 4's office directly, but no comments have been received.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) stated that there is a water of the United States in the area of proposed abandonment, but it would not be impacted by the project. Therefore, the Corps indicated that no permit is required.

Based on all information available to date, SEA does not believe that salvage activities would cause significant environmental impacts. In addition to the parties on the Board's service list for this proceeding, SEA is providing a copy of this EA to USEPA, Region 4, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Tennessee Clearinghouse for their review and comment.

## **HISTORIC REVIEW**

IC served the historic report on the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). The SHPO has submitted comments stating that the proposed abandonment would not affect any known archaeological sites or historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). We have reviewed the report and the information provided by the SHPO and concur with the SHPO's comments.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.5(c) and 36 CFR 800.8, we have determined that the proposed abandonment will not adversely affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 CFR 800.11(d), consists of the railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public.

SEA conducted a search of the Native American Consultation Database at <http://home.nps.gov/nacd/> to identify Federally recognized tribes that may have ancestral connections to the project area. The database identified no Federally-recognized tribes in Dyer County, TN.

## **CONDITIONS**

Based on all information available to date, we recommend that no conditions be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, SEA concludes that, as currently proposed, and if the recommended conditions are imposed, 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 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) 245-0230, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

### **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this Environmental Assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Danielle Gosselin, who prepared this Environmental Assessment. Environmental comments may also be filed electronically on the Board's web site, [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov), by clicking on the "E-FILING" link. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-43 (Sub-No. 183X) in all correspondence, including e-filings, addressed to the Board.** If you have any questions regarding this Environmental Assessment, please contact Danielle Gosselin, the environmental contact for this case, by phone at (202) 245-0300, fax at (202) 245-0454, or e-mail at [danielle.gosselin@stb.dot.gov](mailto:danielle.gosselin@stb.dot.gov).

Date made available to the public: April 21, 2008.

**Comment due date: May 5, 2008.**

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Anne K. Quinlan  
Acting Secretary

Attachment