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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE APRIL 20, 2000

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-531X

PIONEER VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY, INC.—ABANDONMENT  
EXEMPTION—IN HAMPDEN COUNTY, MA

Decided: April 20, 2000

A decision served on July 23, 1998, authorized Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc. (PVRR), to abandon a 1.9-mile line of railroad known as the Westfield Branch extending from milepost 0.0 to the end of the line at milepost 1.9 in Westfield, Hampden County, MA. The July 23, 1998 decision stated that, if consummation has not been effected by PVRR's filing of a notice of consummation by July 23, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire. Under 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), a railroad may, for good cause shown, file a request for an extension of time to file a notice of consummation in abandonment proceedings. The due date for filing a notice of consummation was extended until April 21, 2000, by decisions served July 19, 1999, and January 21, 2000.

On April 18, 2000, PVRR filed a request to further extend, until July 21, 2000, the time to consummate the abandonment and file its notice of consummation. Although PVRR has apparently reached an agreement to sell the right-of-way to the City of Westfield, the parties assertedly have encountered an unexpected delay in completing the sale transaction by the April 21, 2000 deadline. Under the circumstances, PVRR requests that the due date for filing the required notice of consummation be extended for an additional 3-month period.

PVRR has shown good cause to further extend the time to consummate the abandonment and for filing a notice of consummation in this proceeding. Accordingly, the request will be granted.

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources

It is ordered:

1. PVRR's request for an extension of time to exercise the abandonment authority is granted.
2. The authority to abandon must be exercised on or before July 21, 2000.

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3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary