

33817

SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 29, 2003

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB DOCKET NO. AB-55 (Sub-No. 634X)

CSX Transportation, Inc. - Abandonment Exemption - In Monroe County, IN

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT or railroad) filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad in Monroe County, Indiana (IN). The rail line proposed for abandonment is located between Milepost 00Q-219.55 and Milepost 00Q-222.50 in Bloomington, IN. The total distance is approximately 2.95 miles. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to this report. If the notice becomes effective, CSXT has indicated an intent to remove the rails, ties and upper layer of ballast from the right-of-way (ROW).

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The rail line is located in Bloomington, Monroe County, IN. Land use in the vicinity of the ROW is largely suburban or urban in nature, and the surrounding terrain is slightly hilly. There are approximately 13 public crossings along the ROW, which varies in width from 15 feet to 100 feet from the centerline of track. The Redevelopment Commission of the City of Bloomington has expressed an interest in converting the ROW to trails use.

The line was originally constructed in the 1850s by the New Albany and Salem Railroad, which was renamed the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago Railway Company in 1859. The Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railway Company (CI&L) assumed ownership of the line in 1897. In 1971, the line was merged into the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company (L&N), which had acquired 50 percent of the capital stock of CI&L back in 1902. In 1972, The Family Lines was adopted to identify L&N and the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. In 1980, Seaboard Coast Line Industries, Inc. and Chessie System, Inc. merged to form CSX Corporation. Finally, a 1983 merger of The Family Lines' affiliates created the Seaboard Coast Railroad, Inc., which was renamed CSX Transportation, Inc. in 1986. According to CSXT, there are no structures on the rail line that are 50 years of age or older that are eligible for listing on the National Register.

According to CSXT, there are three rail patrons on the line: The Herald Times, Black Lumber Company, and Bender Lumber Company. The Herald Times received 52 carloads in 2000, 61 carloads in 2001, and 67 carloads in 2002. According to CSXT, The Herald Times facility is exclusively served by rail, but has agreed to modify its facility so that it may receive shipments by truck.

Black Lumber Company received 31 carloads in 2000, 22 carloads in 2001, and 23 carloads in 2002. According to CSXT, Black Lumber Company also utilizes truck transportation, and has access to a public team track facility in the area.

Bender Lumber Company received zero carloads in 2000, zero carloads in 2001, and eight carloads in 2002. According to CSXT, Bender Lumber Company also utilizes truck transportation, and has access to a public team track facility in the area.

In the past several years, commodities transported on the rail line have included paper, newsprint, produce, chemicals, lumber products and appliances.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad submitted environmental and historical reports that indicate that the quality of the human environment would not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities. The railroad served these reports 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)]. The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service - State Conservationist (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) stated that the proposed abandonment would not result in the conversion of prime farmland.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Louisville District concluded that the proposed abandonment, as outlined by CSXT, would not involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, including wetlands. Therefore, a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) would not be required.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Bloomington Field Office reported that the proposed project would have no significant effect on wetlands and would not affect any Federally endangered species.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources noted that the rail line is not located within a state Coastal Zone Management area.

At the time this report was prepared, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Indiana Department of Environmental Management had not commented on the proposed abandonment.

According to CSXT, there are no known hazardous waste sites or hazardous material spill sites on the subject ROW. CSXT stated that the ROW and existing public and private crossings would be used to access the ROW to remove rails, ties and ballast material. All removed materials would be transported away from the ROW.

Based on 2002 rail traffic for the line, the proposed abandonment could divert up to approximately 100 railcars per year to truck traffic. This diversion is well below the Board's thresholds for determining when to calculate a net change in energy use, quantify anticipated effects on air emissions, or assess the impacts of additional truck traffic on local transportation networks. Because of the limited amount of annual rail traffic on the line, the proposed abandonment would be expected to have minimal, if any, impact on the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities. Using a conversion factor of four trucks per railcar, up to approximately 400 additional trucks per year could move on local roads. This minor increase in truck traffic would not be expected to result in measurable or adverse impacts to air quality or the local transportation network.

At the time this EA was prepared, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (the State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) had not completed its analysis of the proposed abandonment. Pending completion of the SHPO's review, we recommend a condition to ensure compliance with Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. The applicant shall take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the ROW until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line would 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

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line do take place, the ROW 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 Surface Transportation 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 Surface Transportation Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 20 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of ROWs 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 the Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL 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 David Navecky, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 634X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board. Questions regarding this environmental assessment should be referred to David Navecky at 202-565-1593 (naveckyd@stb.dot.gov).**

Date made available to the public: August 26, 2003.

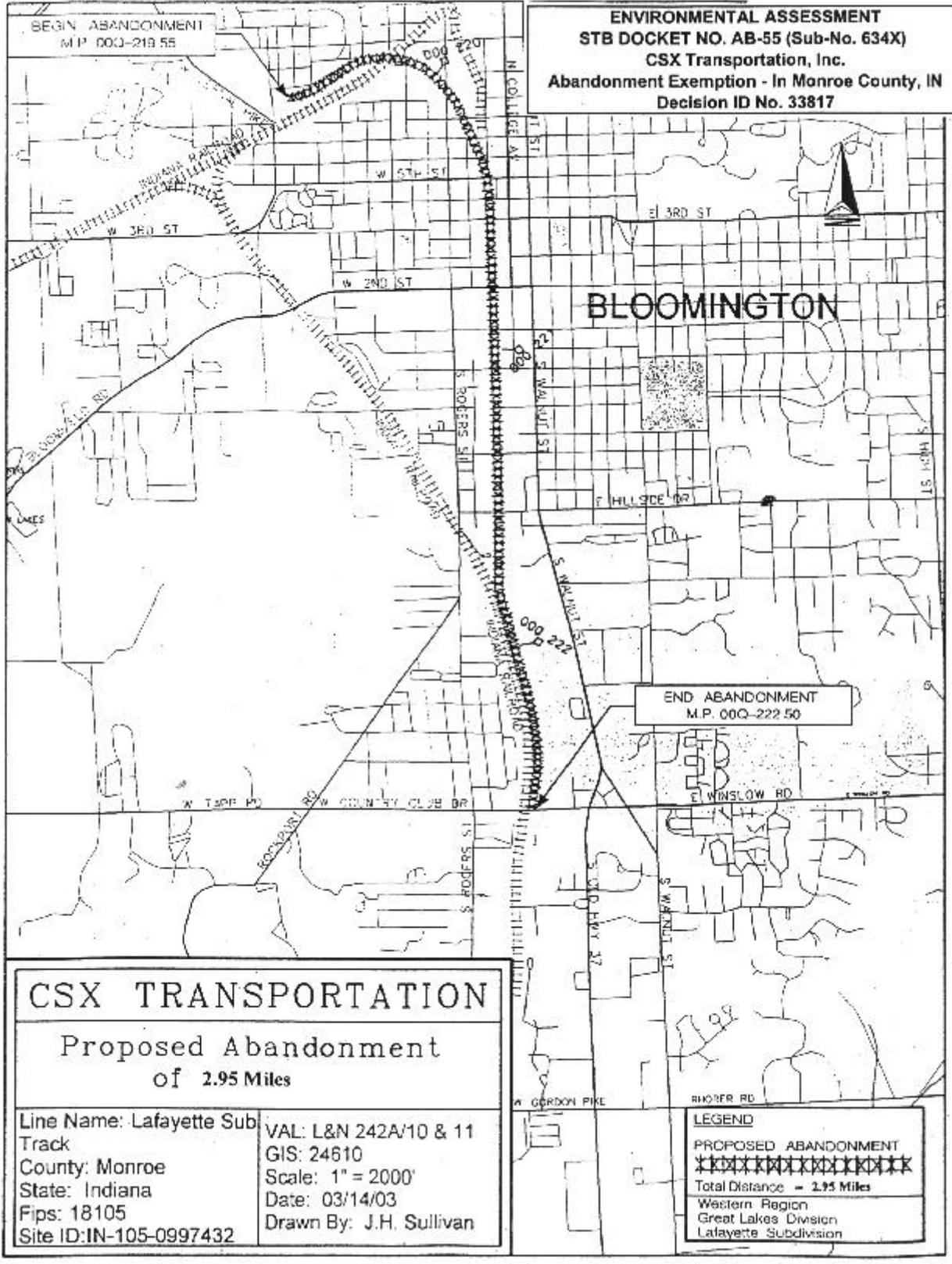
Comment due date: **September 25, 2003.**

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
STB DOCKET NO. AB-55 (Sub-No. 634X)
CSX Transportation, Inc.
Abandonment Exemption - In Monroe County, IN
Decision ID No. 33817



BEGIN ABANDONMENT
 M.P. 000-219.55

END ABANDONMENT
 M.P. 000-222.50

CSX TRANSPORTATION

**Proposed Abandonment
 of 2.95 Miles**

Line Name: Lafayette Sub
 Track
 County: Monroe
 State: Indiana
 Fips: 18105
 Site ID: IN-105-0997432

VAL: L&N 242A/10 & 11
 GIS: 24610
 Scale: 1" = 2000'
 Date: 03/14/03
 Drawn By: J.H. Sullivan

LEGEND

PROPOSED ABANDONMENT
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 Total Distance - 2.95 Miles
 Western Region
 Great Lakes Division
 Lafayette Subdivision