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SERVICE DATE - MAY 28, 1999

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AB-55(SUB-NO.566X),
CSX Transportation, INC. Proposed Abandonment Jacksonville
(Acorn Street), Duval County, Florida

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the CSX Transportation, INC. 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 a portion of its Kingsland Subdivision, Jacksonville Service Lane, extending from Milepost S-634.85 at Acorn Street to Milepost S-635.09 at the connection of the line to be abandoned with CSXT's former Jacksonville-Savannah main line, a total distance of approximately 0.24 miles in Jacksonville, Duval Country, Florida. The lines traverses through United States Postal Service ZIP Codes 32204 and 32205. 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

The sole active shipper on the line, Smurfit Recycling Company, ships scrap paper from its facility. In 1996, Smurfit shipped 7 carloads of scrap paper from its Beaver Street facility via rail. In 1997, Smurfit shipped 5 carloads via rail. In 1998, Smurfit shipped 10 carloads of recyclables via rail. Smurfit has been offered the use of CSXT's Honeymoon Yard team track facility which is located approximately one mile from Smurfit's Beaver Street facility. In the event, Smurfit elects not to utilize CSXT's team track facility at Honeymoon Yard, truck

transportation is an option. Smurfit currently uses truck transportation at its Beaver Street facility.

The second patron on the line is National Wire, S.E., Inc. (National Wire) which is located at church street. National Wire has not used rail service in seven years. The abandonment will have no adverse effect on this company.

The line proposed for abandonment is located just south of and parallels the Beaver Street Viaduct in Jacksonville. The viaduct is an integral part of highway U.S. 90 which is an extremely highly traveled east-west road through Jacksonville.

If this line is approved for abandonment the property will be utilized by the State of Florida in connection with the State's reconstruction of the Beaver Street Viaduct, probably as a retention pond or construction staging area.

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, Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Community Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Division of Historical Resources and State Historic Preservation Office.

CONDITIONS

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has expressed concern about potential contamination of the upper layer of the ballast on the line. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any

decision granting abandonment authority: CSX Transportation Inc. shall consult with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) regarding the potential contamination of the upper layer of the ballast. The site should conform to the Soil Cleanup Goals for Florida and any contaminated soils must be disposed of in a manner that is consistent with the state of Florida requirements. In the event that any remediation is necessary, CSX shall develop a remediation work plan and not dispose of the upper layer of the ballast until the remediation of the contamination is complete. Also, CSX shall advise the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) of the results of its consultations and provide SEA with a copy of the FDEP approved mitigation plan.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, 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 Phillis Johnson-Ball, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-55 (Sub No.566X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: 5-28-99.

Comment due date: June 28, 1999.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP