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SERVICE DATE - JULY 10, 1998

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**NO. AB-468 (SUB-NO. 3X)**

**Paducah & Louisville Railway, Inc.**  
**Abandonment Exemption**  
**In Muhlenberg County, Kentucky**

### **BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, the Paducah & Louisville Railway, Inc. (P&L) 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 Milepost J-126.6 at Central City, KY and Milepost J-133.3 at Greenville, KY, a distance of 6.70 miles; and 6.14 miles of Beech Creek Lead to Pond Creek, KY, in Muhlenberg County, KY. 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**

Recently, one rail patron, Reed Minerals, a slag facility located near the end of Beech Creek lead track, has used the line proposed for abandonment to ship outbound granulated slag. Reed did not receive any inbound shipments by rail. Reed shipped an average of 720 carloads per year from its facility in 1996 and 1997. Reed has shipped no carloads since January 1998. Reed has now closed its facility located on the line proposed for abandonment here and has relocated near its existing facilities on a CSX Transportation rail line in Drakesboro, KY.

### **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 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4; the Fish and Wildlife Service; the Kentucky Heritage Council; and the City of Greenville, KY.

#### **CONDITIONS**

The Kentucky Heritage Council and State Historic Preservation Officer has not completed its review of the potential eligibility of sites and structures located on the line proposed for abandonment. Therefore, a condition is recommended requiring that **Paducah & Louisville Railway shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way that are 50 years old or older 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, 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, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Victoria Rutson, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-468 (Sub No. 3X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ms. Rutson at (202) 565-1545.

Date made available to the public: July 8, 1998.

**Comment due date: August 6, 1998.**

Board decisions and notices are available on its website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

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MAP HAS TO BE SCANNED

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