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SERVICE DATE - MAY 20, 1998
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-290 (SUB-NO.193X)

NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
--ABANDONMENT
AND
DISCONTINUANCE OF TRackage RIGHTS--
AT WAYNESBORO, VIRGINIA

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the **Norfolk and Western Railway Company** ("**NW**") has 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 its railroad line located between Stations 60+00 and 67+56, a distance of 0.14 miles, and for discontinuance of trackage rights over CSXT between Stations 0+64 and 60+00, a distance of 1.12 miles, at Waynesboro, Virginia. CSXT received abandonment authority for the 1.12 mile segment in a decision served May 6, 1987, in ICC Docket No. AB-18 (Sub-No. 86X). A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. 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 NW, the land use along the right-of-way is primarily 75 percent industrial and 25 percent commercial businesses. No traffic has moved over the line for two years and none is anticipated.

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 contacted 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, Western Virginia Field Office, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Environmental Quality, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Transportation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Historic Resources.

Generally, all agencies responded that there would be minimal environmental impacts associated with abandonment and salvage. However, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality expressed concern about air quality, waste issues, and erosion and sediment control during salvage operations. During salvage, NW is required to control fugitive air emissions and any land clearing debris must be disposed of in an approved manner. NW must comply with Virginia open burning and fugitive air emission regulations. NW should employ appropriate erosion and sediment control measures for track removal.

To ensure compliance with the Virginia regulations protecting water quality and air quality during salvage operations, we will recommend that a condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority requiring NW to consult with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality prior to beginning salvage operations.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

NW shall consult with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Valley Regional Office, prior to any salvage operations, to ensure compliance with Virginia's regulations protecting soil erosion, and air quality.

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

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. The properties proposed for abandonment may be suitable for other public purposes, but may be subject to reversionary interests that would affect transfer of title for other than rail purposes. 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. 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 rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Congressional and Public Services (OCPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OCPS directly at (202) 565-1594, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Congressional and Public Services, Room 843, 1925 K St. Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, 1925 K St. Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Scott Decker, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No.193X) in all correspondence addressed to the**

Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Scott Decker at (202) 565-1531.

Date made available to the public: May 15, 1998.

Comment due date: June 1, 1998.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP