

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AB 33 (SUB-NO. 167X)

**Union Pacific Railroad Company – Abandonment and Discontinuance Exemption –In
Cook County, II**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903, 10904, and 10905 in order to permit abandonment from Milepost 12.60 to milepost 13.64 (South Segment) and discontinuance of service from milepost 13.64 to milepost 21.70 (North Segment) over the Skokie Industrial Lead, a distance of 9.10 miles in Cook County, Illinois. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report.

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. 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 Department of Natural Resources, State Historical Society, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Coastal Zone Management, Department of Transportation, and National Geodetic Survey.

Traffic

UP states that it is seeking the exemption because the line is no longer viable. UP further states that the only remaining shipper on the line, Crafty Beaver, does not furnish sufficient business to warrant continued operation. Crafty Beaver Home Centers (Crafty Beaver) receives rail shipments of lumber, plywood, and gypsum wallboard. Using the base year volume (11/01/00 through 10/31/01) of 33 cars and assuming a maximum rail car-to-truck ratio of four to one, the abandonment would result in a maximum of 264 loaded or empty truck moves, or about one per work day. Crafty Beaver by letter of May 6, 2002 states that it does not oppose abandonment of the line. There are no other shippers on the line.

Future Land Use

UP intends to salvage the track structure on the South Segment and dispose of the underlying real estate. However, UP intends to “rail bank” the North Segment, leaving the tracks and bridges in place, and retaining its interest in the underlying right-of-way. UP states the only salvage activity contemplated for the North Segment is the grade crossings may be removed or paved over as they require replacement or repair. In the event UP desires to abandon the North Segment at a later date, UP will seek further authority from the Board at that time.

Biological Resources

The Illinois Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has indicated no endangered species are known to occur in the area. NS is not aware of any critical habitat that would be destroyed or modified as a result of the proposed abandonment. Since salvage operations will be handled generally within the right-of-way, it is unlikely that any endangered species that might be present would be adversely affected.

Historic Preservation

The Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority, requiring the UP to retain its interest in the line until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) advises that one geodetic station markers, M 134, have been identified that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. If there are any planned activities which will disturb or destroy these markers, NGS requires not less than 90 days notification in advance of such activities in order to plan for their relocation. We recommend that a condition be placed on any grant of abandonment authority requiring UP to notify NGS 90 days in advance of disturbing these markers.

CONDITIONS

The Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority, requiring the UP to retain its interest in the line until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

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CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandon 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 abandon would include denial (and, therefore, no change in operations) or continued operation by another operator. In this case, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** 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-33 (Sub-No. 167X) in all correspondence addressed to the Commission.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

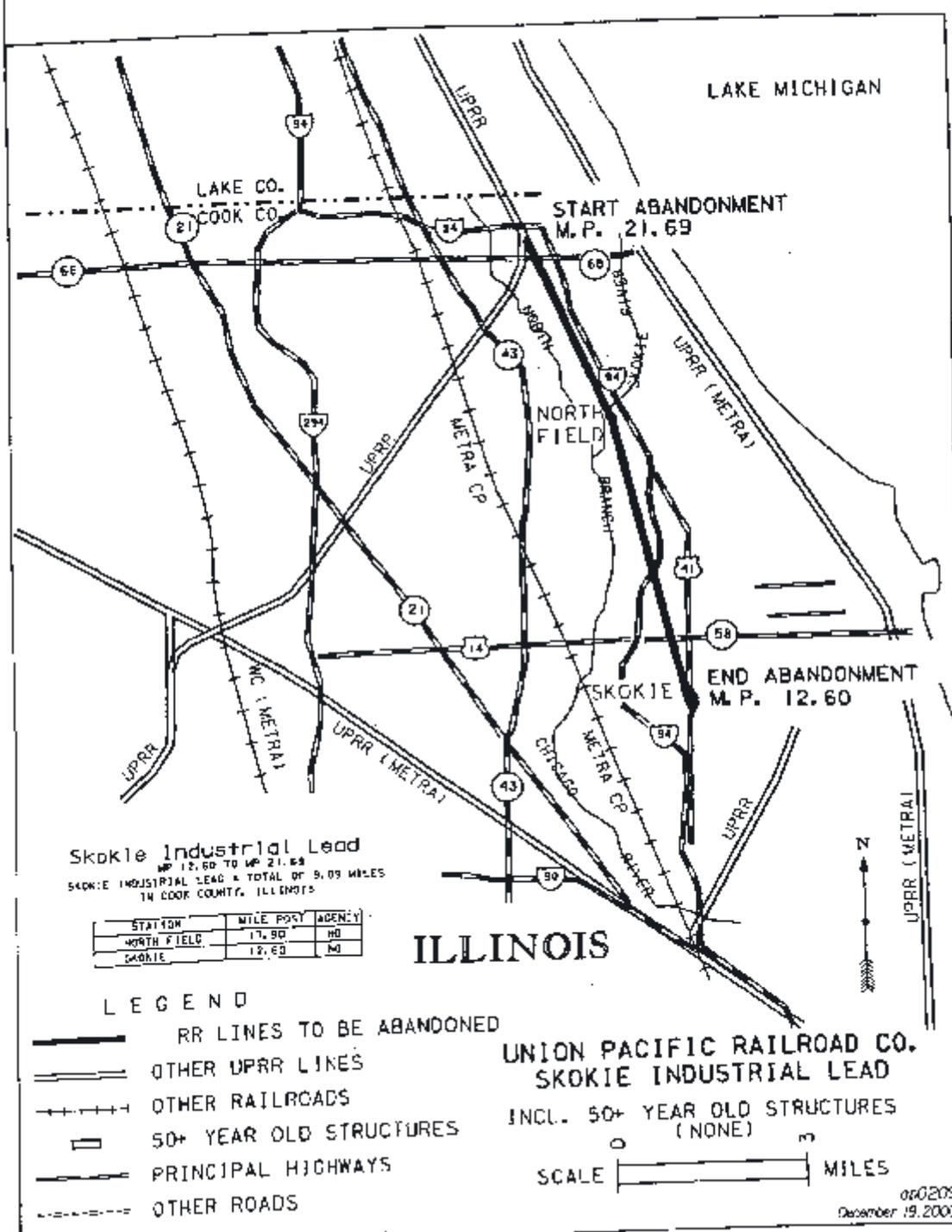
Date made available to the public: July 05, 2002

Comment due date: August 6, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment



LAKE MICHIGAN

LAKE CO.
COOK CO.

START ABANDONMENT
M.P. 21.69

NORTH
FIELD

END ABANDONMENT
M.P. 12.60

Skokie Industrial Lead
MP 12.60 TO MP 21.69
S40N:E INDUSTRIAL LEAD & TOTAL OF 9.09 MILES
IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

STATION	MILE POST	AGENCY
NORTH FIELD	17.60	MD
SKOKIE	12.60	MD

ILLINOIS

LEGEND

- RR LINES TO BE ABANDONED
- OTHER UPRR LINES
- OTHER RAILROADS
- 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES
- PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS
- OTHER ROADS

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CO.
SKOKIE INDUSTRIAL LEAD

INCL. 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES
(NONE)

SCALE MILES

010209
December 19, 2000