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SERVICE DATE - JULY 2, 1997

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-55 (SUB-NO. 547X)

**CSX Transportation, Inc.
Abandonment Exemption in
Muskegon County, Michigan**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc (CSXT) 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 Berry and Montague, a distance of 13.63 miles in Muskegon County, Michigan. 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

Currently, DuPont Chemical Company is the only shipper on the line. During the last several years DuPont's traffic has declined and CSXT states that DuPont is closing its Montague facility and that demolition of the facility is expected to be completed by September 1997.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT 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 and verified the information contained in the environmental report.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on

any decision granting abandonment authority.

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.

Since the only shipper on the line is closing its facility, and since there appears to be no other rail customers planning to use the rail line, alternatives to the proposed abandonment, such as denial or discontinuance of service without abandonment, are not practical.

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 responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, 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, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB- 55 (Sub No. 547X) in**

all correspondence addressed to the Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Dana White at (202) 565-1552.

Date made available to the public: June 27, 1997.

Comment due date: July 28, 1997. (30 Days)

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment (Map not attached; available only through written request to STB).