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SERVICE DATE - JUNE 4, 2002

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**STB Docket No. AB-565 (Sub. No. 10X)**

**New York Central Lines, LLC - Abandonment Exemption -  
in Worcester County, MA**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, New York Central Lines, LLC (NYC), and CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), (collectively, applicants) jointly filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 for NYC to abandon and CSXT to discontinue service over a line of railroad between Milepost QBU-0.0 and Milepost QBU-4.2 from Fitchburg to Leominster, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles, in Worcester County, Massachusetts. This case embraces STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub. No. 616X), CSX Transportation, Inc. - Discontinuance of Service Exemption - in Worcester County, Massachusetts. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, applicants 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 the applicants, there has been no local traffic on the line for two years. Applicants state that the proposed abandonment would result in the removal of the rail, crossties, and possibly the upper layer of ballast. The line is located within an urban setting and may be suitable for alternative public use.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Applicants 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. Applicants served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. In the environmental report, applicants state that they plan to remove all of the rail, crossties, and possibly the upper layer of ballast. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

## 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.

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. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Surface Transportation 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 Surface Transportation 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 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 the 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 Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to**

**Docket No. AB-565 (Sub-No. 10X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Dana White, the environmental contact for this case by phone at (202) 565-1552, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at whited@stb.dot.gov.

Date made available to the public: June 4, 2002.

Comment due date: **June 18, 2002 (15 days).**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

AB 565 (10X)

Attachment

