

29070

SERVICE DATE - MAY 18, 1998

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB Docket NO. AB-55 (SUB-NO. 560X)

CSX Transportation, Inc.--Abandonment Exemption--in
Logan County, WV

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 an approximately 0.73 miles of railroad between milepost CMB-0.33 at Bandmill Junction and milepost CMB-1.05 at Melville, in Logan County, WV. 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

In its petition, CSXT states that in recent years, Austin Powder Company (Austin Powder) has shipped or received freight by rail. Austin Powder operates an explosives manufacturing plant in Melville. In 1996, Austin Powder received 78 carloads of ammonium nitrate via rail at its Melville facility; 51 carloads in 1997, via rail at Melville and 12 carloads through March 9, 1998. CSXT states that Austin Powder plans to move its operation at Melville to CSXT's Peach Creek Yard Transflo Services Facility (Peach Creek). Following the relocation by Austin Powder, there will no further originating or terminating traffic on the line. CSXT will not abandon the line until Austin Powder has completely relocated its operations from Melville to the Peach Creek facility. The right-of-way is 30 feet wide and meanders through an unpopulated and mountainous hollow adjacent to a stream.

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.

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 discontinuance would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In this case, 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 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, send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 2215, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Ann Newman, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to**

STB Docket No. 55 (Sub-No. 560X)

Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 560X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ann Newman at (202) 565-1629.

Date made available to the public: May 18, 1998.

Comment due date: June 17, 1998.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

STB Docket No. 55 (Sub-No. 560X)

***** MAP HAS TO BE SCANNED *****