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SERVICE DATE - MAY 4, 1999

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-462 (Sub-No. 2X)]

Southeastern International Corporation--Abandonment Exemption--in Wharton County, TX

On April 14, 1999, Southeastern International Corporation (SEI) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon its entire 11.76-mile line of railroad extending from milepost 42.24 in Wharton to milepost 54.0 near Lane City, in Wharton County, TX. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 77488 and 77453, and includes no stations.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in SEI's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

In this proceeding, SEI is proposing to abandon a line that constitutes its entire rail system. When issuing abandonment authority for a railroad line that constitutes the carrier's entire system, the Board does not impose labor protection, except in specifically enumerated circumstances. See Northampton and Bath R. Co.--Abandonment, 354 I.C.C. 784, 785-86 (1978) (Northampton). Therefore, if the Board grants the petition for

exemption, in the absence of a showing that one or more of the exceptions articulated in Northampton are present, no labor protective conditions would be imposed.

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by August 2, 1999.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than May 24, 1999. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-462 (Sub-No. 2X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Karl Morell, 1455 F Street, N.W., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005. Replies to the SEI petition are due on or before May 24, 1999.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning

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environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at  
“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: April 22, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary