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SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 12, 2002

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DOCKET NO. AB-55 (Sub-No. 618)

CSX Transportation, Inc. - Discontinuance - at Memphis, in Shelby County, TN

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX) has filed an application seeking authority under 49 U.S.C. 10903 to discontinue service over the 1.1-mile rail line portion of its Midwest Region, Nashville Division, Memphis Terminal between milepost ONI 224.0, at Memphis, TN and milepost ONI 222.9 east of Memphis, TN. The line is located in Shelby County, TN. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. CSX has not requested authorization to abandon the subject rail line. Salvaging activities, such as the removal of rail and ties, would not occur.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

According to CSX, continued operation of the line is a burden on interstate commerce. There is one bridge on the line which is in need of repair and rebuilding. CSX will not earn a return on the investment. The bridge crosses Cypress Creek at milepost ONI 223.3. The Cypress Creek bridge is unsafe and out-of-service. Arsonists set fire to the bridge, which caused substantial damage. The condition of the bridge caused CSX to impose an embargo of the line on March 1, 2001 in order to avoid unsafe operations. Prior to embargoing the line, CSX served one local customer on the line, Bolen Brunson Bell Lumber Company (BBB), a lumber transloading business. According to CSX, BBB has transportation alternatives.

CSX previously filed a petition to exempt its abandonment of the line, plus an additional 12.24 miles, in CSX Transportation, Inc. - Abandonment Exemption - (Between Memphis and Cordova) in Shelby County, TN, STB Docket No AB-55 (Sub-No. 590X). The Board denied CSX's petition in a decision served on December 12, 2001.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSX submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the discontinuance of service or any post-discontinuance activities. CSX served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal,

state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's (Board's) environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

The Tennessee Historical Commission (TN SHPO) has advised us that the undertaking, as proposed, may affect historic properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We, therefore, recommend a condition to address this concern.

CSX's application for discontinuance of service states that a total of 198 carloads of lumber were moved by BBB on the line during calendar year 2000. Using a rail-to-truck conversion factor of 4 trucks per carload¹, SEA calculates that on a per day basis, if all the rail traffic is diverted to truck traffic, the abandonment would generate an estimated 792 new trucks per year (1584 truck trips assuming an empty backhaul). This equates to approximately 7 trucks per day being added to area roads during a 240 workday year². This increase will not exceed the Board's thresholds of an increase of more than 10 percent of the average daily traffic or 50 vehicles a day on any affected road segment [49 C.F.R. 1105.7(e)].

If CSX receives authorization to discontinue service, the opportunity to route rail traffic to the subject line would remain. Abandonment activities, including the removal of rails and ties, could not occur. If CSX would like to abandon the subject rail line at some time in the future, they would be required to request authorization from the Board to do so. Under such a request, the proposed abandonment would be reviewed by the Board, and this review would include the preparation of an environmental document under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Pursuant to NEPA and the Board's environmental rules that implement NEPA (49 CFR 1105), appropriate Federal, state and local agencies would be provided the opportunity to review the environmental document and provide comments for the Board's consideration.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that the following environmental condition, addressing the environmental concern discussed above, be placed on any decision granting discontinuance authority.

The Tennessee Historical Commission has determined that the undertaking, as proposed, may affect historic properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Pending resolution of this issue, CSX shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the line until completion of the Section 106 process of the national Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

¹ The conversion factor is an estimate based on the varied nature of the commodity transported on the line.

² 240 workdays result when weekends and holidays are subtracted from a 365 day year.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, discontinuance of service on 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), or continued operation by another operator. In either of these cases, 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** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Kenneth Blodgett, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-55 (Sub No. 618) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Kenneth Blodgett, the environmental contact for this case by phone at (202) 565-1554, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at blodgettk@stb.dot.gov.

Date made available to the public: **August 12, 2002.**

Comment due date: **September 10, 2002 (30 days).**

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

