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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE JANUARY 21, 2000

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-531X

PIONEER VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY, INC.—ABANDONMENT  
EXEMPTION—IN HAMPDEN COUNTY, MA

Decided: January 21, 2000

A decision served on July 23, 1998, authorized Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc. (PVRR), to abandon a 1.9-mile line of railroad known as the Westfield Branch extending from milepost 0.0 to the end of the line at milepost 1.9 in Westfield, Hampden County, MA. The July 23, 1998 decision stated that, if consummation has not been effected by PVRR's filing of a notice of consummation by July 23, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire. Under 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), a railroad may, for good cause shown, file a request for an extension of time to file a notice of consummation in abandonment proceedings. In a decision served on July 19, 1999, the due date for filing a notice of consummation was extended until January 23, 2000.

On January 12, 2000, PVRR filed a request to further extend, until April 21, 2000, the time to consummate the abandonment and to file its notice of consummation. PVRR states that it has reached an agreement to sell the right-of-way to the City of Westfield. The parties have executed an agreement for the sale and are waiting only for approval of the transaction by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Under the circumstances, PVRR does not want to consummate the abandonment until the sale is completed.

PVRR has shown good cause to extend the time to consummate the abandonment and for filing a notice of consummation in this proceeding. Accordingly, the request will be granted.

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. PVRR's request for an extension of time to exercise the abandonment authority is granted.
2. The authority to abandon must be exercised on or before April 21, 2000.

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3. This decision is effective on its service date.

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary