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SERVICE DATE – OCTOBER 18, 2007

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 168X)

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY—ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—IN
HARDIN COUNTY, IA (ELDORA JUNCTION LINE IN ELDORA, IA)

Decided: October 17, 2007

By decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) served on April 8, 2003, the Board granted to Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) an exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502 from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a segment of line, known as the Eldora Junction Line, extending from milepost 5.10 to milepost 6.22, a distance of 1.12 miles, in Eldora, Hardin County, IA. Also, in response to a request by the City of Eldora, IA, and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (collectively, the City) that the Board issue a NITU for the line, and in light of UP's willingness to enter into trail use negotiations with the City, the Board issued a NITU for a 180-day negotiating period that extended until October 5, 2003. The negotiating period was subsequently extended several times, with the latest extension expiring on October 8, 2007.

By letter filed on October 10, 2007, the City requests another extension of the NITU negotiating period. The City states that the parties need more time to finalize the acquisition of the corridor, and it asks for an extension to April 8, 2008.¹ The City asserts that UP has taken no actions inconsistent with trail use and rail banking. UP states that it is willing to continue to negotiate with the City and supports the request to extend the negotiating period until April 8, 2008.

Even if a negotiating period expires, when a carrier consents to continuing negotiations and has not consummated abandonment of the line, the Board continues to have jurisdiction to grant an extension. Under the circumstances, an extension of the negotiating period is warranted. See Birt v. STB, 90 F.3d 580, 588-90 (D.C. Cir. 1996); Grantwood Village v. Missouri Pac. R.R. Co., 95 F.3d 654, 659 (8th Cir. 1996). An extension of the negotiating period would promote the establishment of trail use and rail banking consistent

¹ Although the request slightly exceeds the customary request of 180 days, the Board has granted such requests in the past. See, e.g., Union Pacific Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Lancaster County, NE, STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 181X) (STB served June 14, 2002).

with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d).² Accordingly, the NITU negotiating period will be extended to April 8, 2008. Given the time that has elapsed since abandonment authority was granted, the parties are urged to conclude their negotiations so that further extensions are not necessary.

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

It is ordered:

1. The request to extend the interim trail use negotiating period is granted.
2. The negotiating period under the NITU is extended to April 8, 2008.
3. This decision is effective on its date of service.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

² See Rail Abandonments—Supplemental Trails Act Procedures, 4 I.C.C.2d 152, 157-58 (1987).