

SERVICE DATE – MARCH 30, 2015

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 331X)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY—ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION—IN HENRY AND SPALDING COUNTIES, GA.

Decided: March 27, 2015

By decision served on January 6, 2012, the Board, under 49 U.S.C. § 10502, exempted from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 10903 the abandonment by Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) of approximately 4.92 miles of rail line between milepost 4.80 M (south of Meredith Park Drive near the line's crossing of Indian Creek in McDonough) and milepost 9.72 M (east of Trestle Road in Locust Grove), in Henry and Spalding Counties, Ga. Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on January 6, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 836). The exemption became effective on February 7, 2012.

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) issued an environmental assessment (EA) in this proceeding which was served on January 13, 2012. In the EA, OEA stated that by letter dated November 29, 2011, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division (SHPO) stated that the proposed abandonment would have no adverse effect on historic resources provided that the trestle bridge on the line not be removed. By letter dated December 20, 2011, NSR responded to the SHPO's letter and stated its intent to remove the bridge as part of the proposed abandonment. OEA recommended that a condition be imposed requiring NSR to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the bridge, which may be eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, until completion of the Section 106 process. Accordingly, by decision served February 1, 2012, the condition was imposed as recommended by OEA.¹

In a supplemental final environmental assessment dated February 4, 2015, OEA states that NSR forwarded correspondence dated February 3, 2015, from the SHPO stating its position that the permanent archival record of the trestle bridge described in the Board's February 1, 2012

¹ Also in the EA, OEA stated that the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Geodetic Survey (NGS) stated there were approximately seven geodetic survey markers located in the area of the proposed abandonment. OEA recommended that a condition be imposed requiring NSR to consult with NGS prior to commencement of any salvage activities to allow for the relocation of any affected survey markers. That condition was also imposed in the February 1, 2012 decision and remains in effect.

decision is adequate mitigation for the adverse effects associated with abandonment of the line. OEA states that the correspondence received from the SHPO concludes the final step of the Section 106 process.

For the foregoing reasons, OEA recommends that the Section 106 condition imposed in the February 1, 2012 decision be removed. Accordingly, based on OEA's recommendation, the proceeding will be reopened and the previously imposed historic preservation condition will be removed.

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

It is ordered:

1. The proceeding is reopened.
2. The Section 106 historic preservation condition imposed in the February 1, 2012 decision is removed.
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.