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**SERVICE DATE - JULY 3, 1997
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-33 (SUB-NO. 111X)

**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
--ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION-- IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, WI**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a portion of its railroad line known as the Clyman Branch, from the end of the line at milepost 110.0 to milepost 112.0, near Fort Atkinson, a distance of 2.0 miles in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

No rail traffic has originated or terminated on the line for at least two years. There is one bridge (constructed in 1925) on the line. UPRR has no plans to remove the bridge.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have verified the record in this proceeding. Responses to the railroad's request for comments thus far have indicated the need for two conditions, as set forth below.

Conditions

The U.S. Department of Commerce, National Geodetic Survey, has informed the Section of Environmental Analysis that three

geodetic station markers may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority requiring the railroad to notify the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Geodetic Survey, 90 days in advance of salvage operations if the following geodetic station markers will be disturbed or destroyed by salvage operations: L 102 PID NHO296; 796 PID NHO297; and M 102 RESET 1972 PID NHO299.

Based on information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority requiring the railroad to comply with the State of Wisconsin Abandoned Railroad Line Salvage and Clean-up Procedures and to consult with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation concerning permits for salvage operations at state highway-railroad at-grade crossings.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and subject to the recommended conditions, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and, therefore, no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, the right-of-way may be appropriate for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR

1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Harold McNulty, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. Ab-33 (Sub.-No.111X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Mr.McNulty at(202) 565-1539.

Date made available to the public: July 1, 1997.

Comment due date: July 16, 1997.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environment Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary