

37344

SERVICE DATE – SEPTEMBER 27, 2006

DO

FR-4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 275X)]

Norfolk Southern Railway Company–Abandonment Exemption–in Gaston County, NC

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F–Exempt Abandonments to abandon a 2.0-mile line of railroad between milepost HG 45.0 and milepost 47.0 in Gastonia, in Gaston County, NC. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 28052, 28054, and 28056 and includes the former station of North Gastonia.

NSR has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) no overhead traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years and overhead traffic, if there were any, could be rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements of 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental report), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic report), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication) and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.–Abandonment–Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on October 27, 2006, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>1</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>2</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by October 10, 2006.<sup>3</sup> Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by October 17, 2006, with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

<sup>2</sup> Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which was increased to \$1,300 effective on April 19, 2006. See Regulations Governing Fees for Services Performed in Connection with Licensing and Related Services–2006 Update, STB Ex Parte No. 542 (Sub-No. 13) (STB served Mar. 20, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> NSR states that the City of Gastonia (the City) is interested in acquiring a 1.8-mile segment of the right-of-way between milepost HG 45.0 and milepost 46.8 for interim trail use under the National Trails System Act and for the creation of a greenway. NSR indicates that it is agreeable to conveying this segment to the City.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to NSR's representative: James R. Paschall, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Three Commercial Place, Norfolk, VA 23510.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

NSR has filed environmental and historic reports which address the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by October 2, 2006. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.] Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), NSR shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by NSR's filing of a notice of consummation by September 27, 2007, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at [WWW.STB.DOT.GOV](http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV).

Decided: September 18, 2006.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary