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SERVICE DATE - JULY 11, 2003

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**AB -55 (Sub-No. 636X)
CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC. ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION
IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

BACKGROUND

CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX) filed a notice of exemption pursuant to 49 CFR 1152.50. To abandon a line of railroad from milepost CBD 83.28, at Tappan, to milepost CBD 85.96, near Port Huron, a distance of approximately 2.68 miles, which traverses through United States Postal Service zip codes 48060 and 48061 in St. Clair County, Michigan. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

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 investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have contacted appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment: Department of Transportation, National Park Services, National Geodetic Survey, Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Officer, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Costal Zone Management Program.

Environmental Analysis

No local or overhead traffic has moved over this line for two years. During the past several years, the principal commodity transported over the line has been chemicals. There will be no diversion of rail traffic to motor carriage. Inconsistency with regional and/or local land use plans is not anticipated. The proposed abandonment and discontinuance should not have adverse impact on prime

agricultural land or farmland resources. The proposed abandonment and discontinuance is not expected to have any effect on the transportation of energy resource. Adverse impacts on air quality and noise levels are not expected. The project is not located in a coastal zone management area. No critical habitat or other fish or wildlife resources is expected to be destroyed, altered or affected as a result of the proposed abandonment discontinuance. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that the action is not likely to adversely affect federally threatened or endangered species. Any water quality effects from the proposed abandonment and discontinuance should be minimal. No bridges over bodies of water will be removed as part of the proposed action. No wetlands are anticipated to be adversely impacted.

HISTORIC

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) advises that additional information is needed to complete the project review. Under these circumstances, we recommend that the Applicant retain the tracks and related railroad appurtenances intact until completion of the Section 106 process.

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) identified one geodetic station marker, R-43, that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. If there are any planned activities which would disturb or destroy these markers, the railroad should notify NGS at least 90 days in advance of such activities in order to plan for their relocation.

CONDITIONS

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) advises that additional information is needed to complete the project review. Under these circumstances, we recommend that the Applicant retain the tracks and related railroad appurtenances intact until completion of the Section 106 process.

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CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and subject to the recommended condition, 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 suitable 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 Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Phillis Johnson-Ball, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB -55 (Sub-No. 636X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

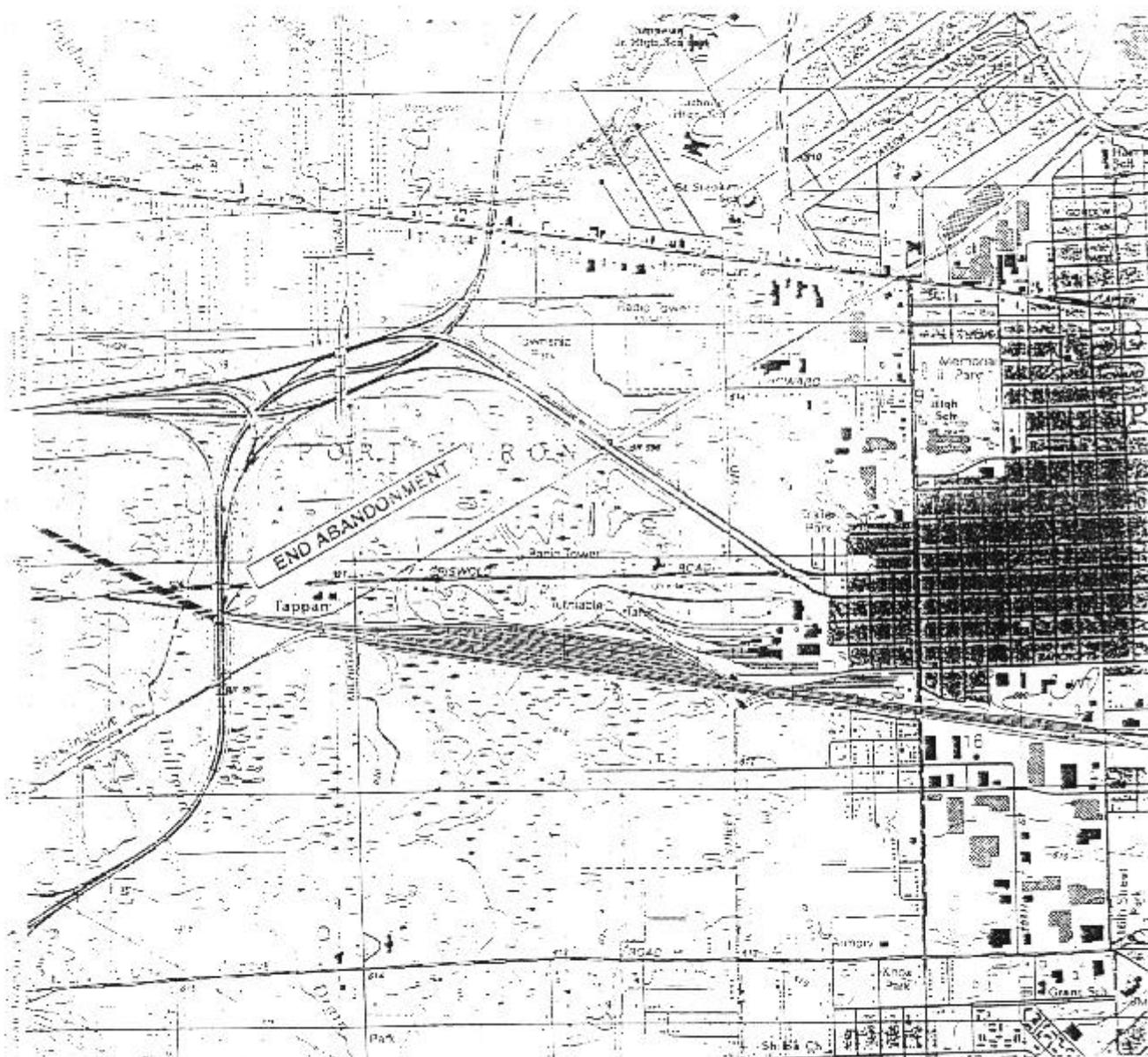
Date made available to the public: 7/11/03.

Comment due date: July 28, 2003.

By the Board, Victoria Rutson , Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment



SCALE 1:24 000

