

34050

SERVICE DATE - OCTOBER 17, 2003

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB Docket No. AB-468 (Sub-No. 6X)

**Paducah & Louisville Railway Inc.–Abandonment Exemption–
in Hopkins County, KY**

BACKGROUND

In the above entitled proceeding, Paducah & Louisville Railway Company (P&L) 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 4.81-mile rail line between milepost J-159.6, near Ilsley, and milepost J-164.41 near Dawson Springs, Hopkins County, KY. 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.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The right-of-way is generally 66 feet in width, with portions ranging from 125-128 feet wide, and traverses a predominantly flat rural area. In its notice P&L states that there has been no originating or terminating traffic on the line during the past two years and any overhead traffic on the line has been rerouted over another parallel line. P&L states that abandonment of this line will result in the removal of the rail, crossties, other track material, and ballast. Maintenance of this line will cease, and that there are currently no plans to remove the bridge structures along the line.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

P&L 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. P&L served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. Also we have consulted with 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. Contacts have included: Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection; Richard L. Frymire, County Judge/Executive; Kentucky Public Service

Commission; Kentucky State Clearinghouse; Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Energy Agency; National Geodetic Survey; National Park Service; Recreation Resource Assistance Div., National Park Service; U.S. Army Engineer District - Louisville; U. S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service and Kentucky Heritage Council.

HISTORIC REVIEW

P&L submitted an historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)]. P&L served the report on the Kentucky Heritage Council (SHPO) pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). The SHPO has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment.

According to P&L there are five bridges on the line that are 50 years old or older. P&L states that it is unaware of any significant, unique aspects to these structures.

CONDITION

We recommend the following environmental condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

The Kentucky Heritage Council has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: P&L shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the line and all sites and structures on the line until the completion of the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, and if the recommended condition is imposed, 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 this case, 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 not 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 the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. 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 responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K St., N.W., Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, 1925 K. St., N.W., Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Ann Newman, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-468 (Sub-No. 6X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ann Newman at (202) 565-1657, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at Ann.Newman@STB.dot.gov.

Date made available to the public: October 17, 2003.

Comment due date: November 23, 2003.

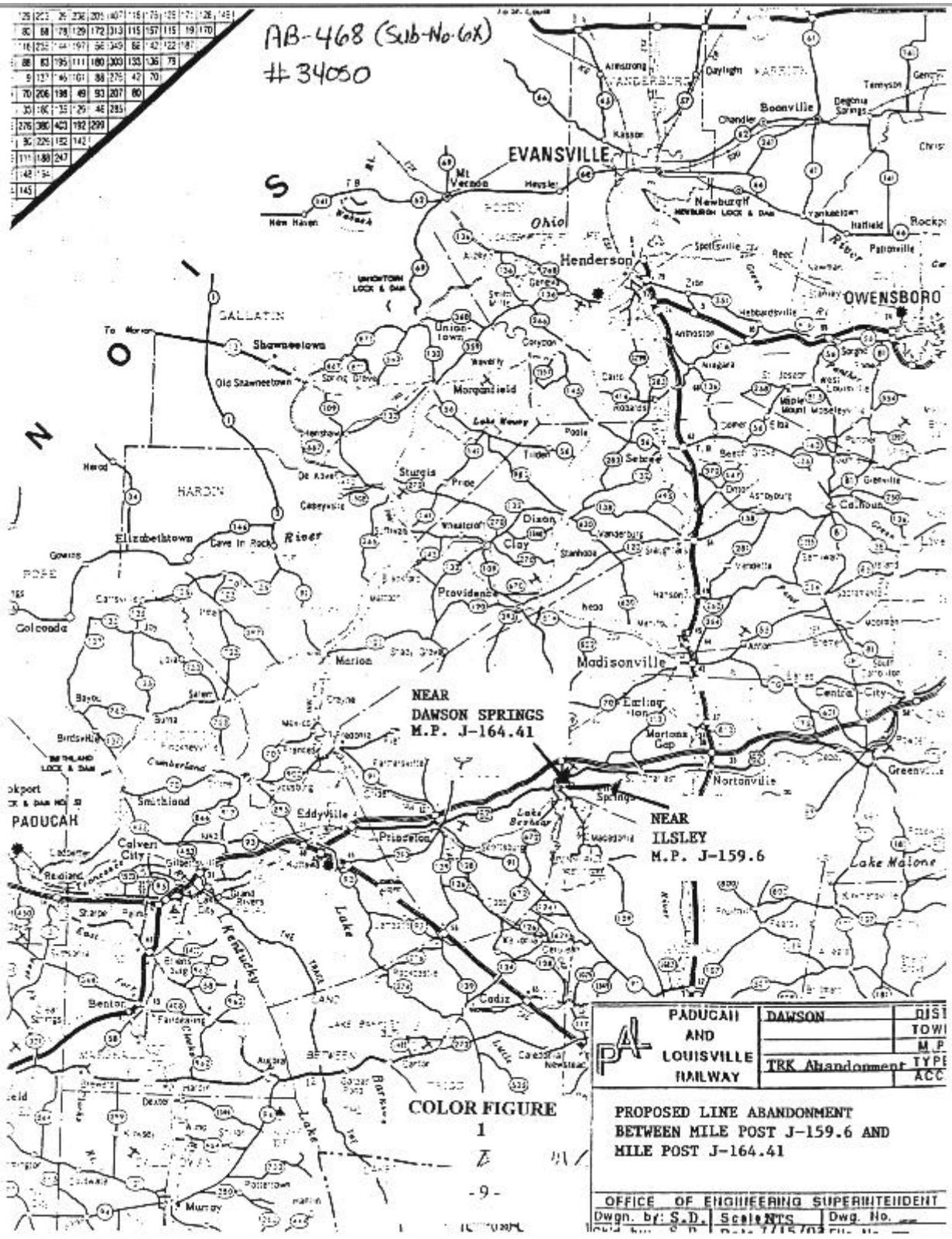
By the Surface Transportation Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

125	223	25	236	305	407	118	175	125	171	126	145
30	68	78	126	172	313	115	157	115	191	170	
116	232	64	197	36	349	66	147	122	187		
68	83	75	111	180	303	153	136	73			
5	17	45	101	38	276	42	70				
70	206	136	49	93	207	80					
35	86	35	29	48	283						
276	386	423	192	299							
35	225	152	142								
111	180	247									
142	154										
145											

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PA PADUCAH AND LOUISVILLE RAILWAY	PADUCAH	DAWSON	DIST
	AND		TOWN
	LOUISVILLE		M.P.
RAILWAY		TRK Abandonment	TYPE
			ACC

PROPOSED LINE ABANDONMENT
BETWEEN MILE POST J-159.6 AND
MILE POST J-164.41

OFFICE OF ENGINEERING SUPERINTENDENT	
Dwgn. by: S.D. ScaleNTS	Dwg. No.