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SERVICE DATE - SEPTEMBER 22, 1998  
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-31 (SUB-NO. 32X)

Grand Trunk Western Railroad, Inc.  
-- Abandonment Exemption --  
In Oakland County, MI

### BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Grand Trunk Western Railroad, Inc. (GTW) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of its railroad line located between milepost 35.3 and milepost 38.4, a distance of 3.1 miles in Oakland County, MI. 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.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

As of May 1, 1998, Powers Distributing has relocated to a GTW private siding in Orion Township, MI. From March 1997 to February 1998, Powers received 234 rail carloads of beer. Cadillac Brick Company is located at MP 38.16-38.40. GTW track to Cadillac Brick's site was embargoed on May 16, 1997. The embargo was due to poor track conditions (i.e., soft track) between MP 37.36 and 38.40. In 1996, Cadillac Brick received 386 rail carloads of brick. Cadillac Brick is now receiving brick by truck or via rail/truck, trans-loaded from a nearby point on another railroad. Neither the City of Pontiac nor the City of Sylvan Lake will lose access to the rail network by virtue of the proposed abandonment.

### 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. Contacts have included Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Geodetic Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, and Oakland County Department of Community and Economic Development.

#### **CONDITIONS**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) identified 30 geodetic station markers along the rail line that may be affected by the proposed abandonment and requests 90 days notice to plan relocation of any markers which may be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **Grand Trunk Western Railroad, Inc. shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey and provide NGS with 90 days notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers.**

#### **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 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. 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, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Mike Dalton, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-31 (Sub-No. 32X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Mike Dalton at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: September 18, 1998.

**Comment due date: October 19, 1998.**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP