

28450

SERVICE DATE - NOVEMBER 28, 1997

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-487 (Sub-No. 3X)

--PITTSBURG & SHAWMUT RAILROAD, INC.--  
ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION  
IN JEFFERSON AND CLARION COUNTIES, PENNSYLVANIA

### BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad, Inc. ("PSRR") 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 0.00 (milepost 40.60 on the mainline of the Laurel Subdivision), located at or near Coder, Pennsylvania, to milepost 23.80, located at or near Piney, Pennsylvania. A distance of 23.80 miles, located in Jefferson and Clarion Counties, Pennsylvania. 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 PSRR believes the line was constructed between September, 1906, and August, 1909, by the Franklin & Clearfield Railroad Company. PSRR has not provided any service on the line since it was purchased from the Mountain Laurel Railroad Company on December 30, 1991. The last service provided on the line by the Mountain Laurel Railroad Company was in December, 1994, when the final shipment of coal originated from the Piney Tipple. Because of the lack of use, the PSRR proposes to abandon the line and to salvage the track materials. The surrounding area is rural. There are no structures on the line which are believed to be 50 years old or older except approximately 25 railroad bridges and one tunnel located at various points along the line.

## 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 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 the National Geodetic Survey; the Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District; the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; and the Fish and Wildlife Service, State College, Pennsylvania.

## CONDITIONS

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has identified the Pittsburgh & Shawmut Tunnel, Piney Twp., Clarion County and the Coder Viaduct, Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad, Rose Twp., Jefferson County as two properties eligible for the National Registry of Historic Places under Criterion C for their engineering significance. Pending resolution of this issue, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **The Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad, Inc. shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites or structures on the line, including the Coder Viaduct bridge, located at milepost 1.41, and the railroad tunnel, located at milepost 23.52, until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified 3 geodetic station marker along the rail line and requests 90 days notice to plan relocation of any marker which may be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **The Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad, Inc. shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey and provide NGS with 90 days notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic marker.**

## 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**

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, 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. Nevertheless, 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 (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.

#### **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC

20423-0001, to the attention of Scott Decker, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-487 (Sub-No. 3X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Scott Decker at (202) 565-1531.

Date made available to the public: **November 25, 1997.**

**Comment due date: December 29, 1997.**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

MAP HAS TO BE SCANNED

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