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SERVICE DATE - DECEMBER 23, 1997

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 554X)

CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC.--ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION--
IN JASPER COUNTY, SC AND CHATHAM COUNTY, GA

Decided: December 19, 1997

CSX Transportation (CSXT) filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F--Exempt Abandonments to abandon approximately 14.20 miles of its line of railroad from milepost SHC-497.59 near South Hardeeville, SC, to milepost SHC-505.05, and from milepost SH-505.05 to milepost SH-510.06 at North Savannah, GA, and the Hutchison Island Spur from milepost SHB-509.93 to milepost SHB-511.66, in Jasper County, SC, and Chatham County, GA. Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on November 24, 1997 (62 FR 32668). The exemption is scheduled to become effective on December 24, 1997.

The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has issued an environmental assessment (EA) in this proceeding, served December 2, 1997. In the EA, SEA indicated that the Savannah District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers advised SEA that authorization from both the Savannah District and the Charleston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is required for the abandonment and/or removal of CSXT's rail line bridge across the Broad River. Therefore, SEA recommends that CSXT consult with the Savannah District and the Charleston District Offices of the Army Corps of Engineers prior to commencing any salvage operations involving the Broad River Bridge.

SEA also indicated that the Georgia Historic Preservation Division has not completed its assessment of the potential impact of this project on historic resources. Therefore, SEA recommends that CSXT take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way in Georgia that are 50 years old or older until completion of the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

The recommended conditions will be imposed.

This decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding is reopened.
2. Upon reconsideration, the exemption of the abandonment of the line described above is subject to the conditions that CSXT shall: (a) consult with the Savannah District and the Charleston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prior to commencing any salvage operations involving the Broad River Bridge; and (b) retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way in Georgia that are 50 years old or older until completion of the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

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