

32068
SEC

SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 9, 2001

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 588X)

CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC.–ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION–IN POLK AND
McMINN COUNTIES, TN

Decided: August 8, 2001

On April 23, 2001, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), filed a petition for exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502 from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a 43.47-mile portion of its line of railroad in the Southern Region, Atlanta Division, Etowah Old Line Subdivision, between milepost OKX 339.00 in Etowah and milepost OKX 382.47 in Copperhill, in McMinn and Polk Counties, TN. Notice of the filing was served and published in the Federal Register on May 11, 2001 (66 FR 24182). Comments about the economic and environmental consequences of the proposed abandonment were filed and requests for interim trail use and public use conditions were received.

On June 22, 2001, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) issued an environmental assessment (EA) addressing the potential environmental impacts of the proposed abandonment. Comments to the EA were due on July 23, 2001. In response to the EA, SEA received a comment from the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest (Forest Service).

By petition filed on August 7, 2001, CSXT requests that the Board hold the proceeding in abeyance. Because of the comments filed by parties concerning alternative use of the right-of-way and environmental issues, CSXT states that it needs additional time to hold discussions with the Forest Service and other parties to resolve these matters. CSXT states that it will report to SEA on the discussions and their outcome and then will file a further petition with the Board. CSXT's request is reasonable and will be granted.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding is held in abeyance until further notice.

STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 588X)

2. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams, Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary