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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE MAY 31, 2000

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB- 32(SUB-NO. 89)

**Boston and Maine Corporation - Abandonment and
Discontinuance of Service - Middlesex County, Massachusetts**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the **Boston and Maine Corporation (B&M)** has filed an application seeking authority under 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon its railroad line known as the Bemis Branch, from milepost 8.83 to milepost 10.94, a distance of approximately 2 miles near the towns of Waltham and Watertown, Middlesex County, MA. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the application is approved, 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

In its application B&M states that it seeks to abandon this line because of declining traffic levels and because the principal shipper on the rail line has decided to close its facility and relocate. B&M also describes in its application plans to redevelop the area, including a portion of the rail line, into an office park.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

B&M 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 reviewed the record in this proceeding.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, 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 certificate of interim trail use (CITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 30 days of filing of the application. 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 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, Office of Public Services, 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, Washington, DC 20423, to

the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB- 32 (Sub No. 89) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Dana White at (202) 565-1552.

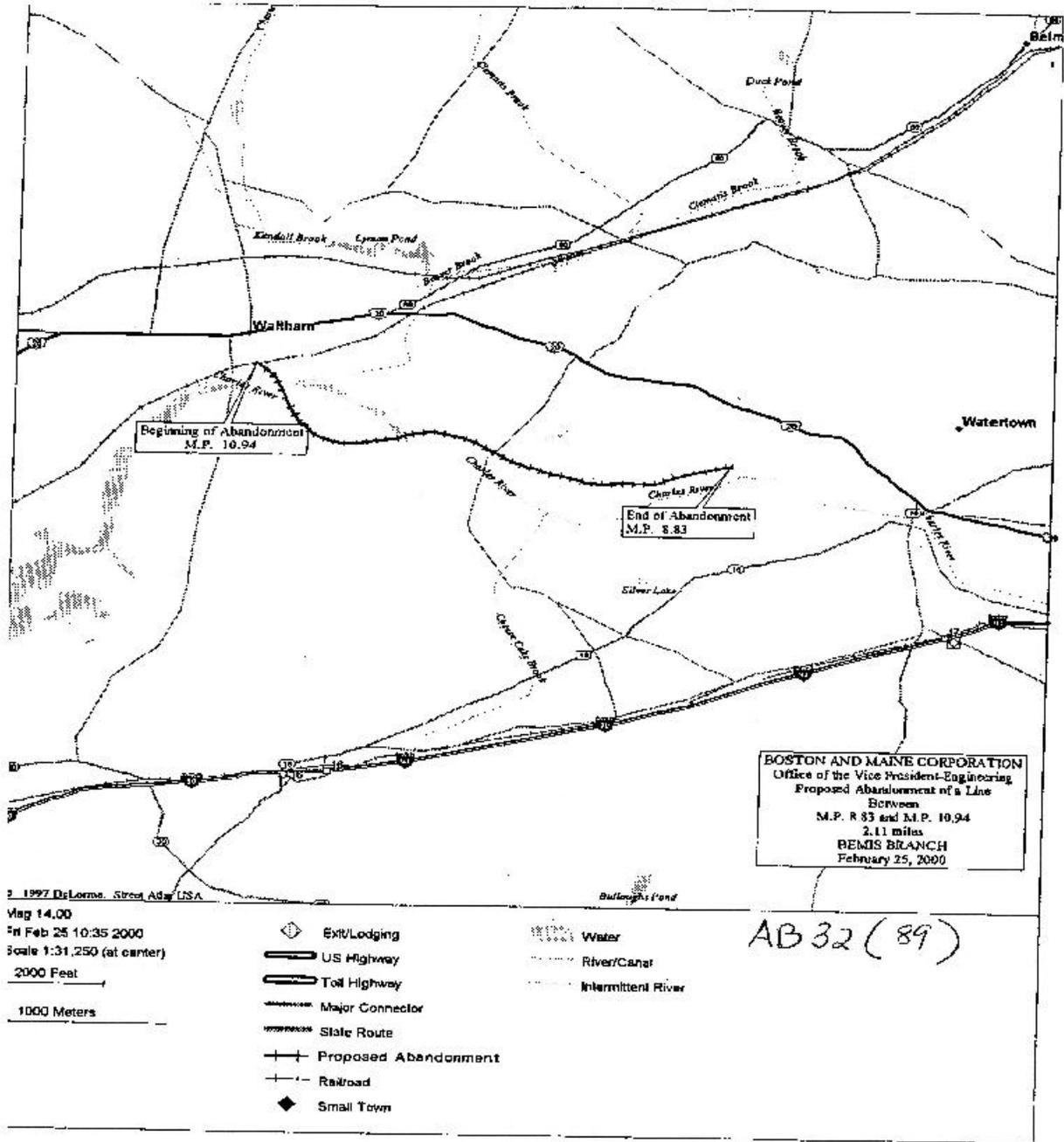
Date made available to the public: 5/31/2000

Comment due date: 6/29/2000 (30 Days)

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment



© 1997 DeLorme, Street Atlas USA
 Map 14.00
 Pl Feb 25 10:35 2000
 Scale 1:31,250 (at center)
 2000 Feet
 1000 Meters

- ◆ Exit/Lodging
- US Highway
- Toll Highway
- Major Connector
- State Route
- Proposed Abandonment
- Railroad
- ◆ Small Town
- Water
- River/Canal
- Intermittent River

BOSTON AND MAINE CORPORATION
 Office of the Vice President-Engineering
 Proposed Abandonment of a Line
 Between
 M.P. 83 and M.P. 10.94
 2.11 miles
 BEMIS BRANCH
 February 25, 2000

AB 32 (89)

