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SERVICE DATE—NOVEMBER 9, 2011

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 33 (Sub-No. 262X)

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY—ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—
IN FULTON AND PEORIA COUNTIES, ILL.

Decided: November 9, 2011

Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) filed a notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. pt. 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon a 24.7-mile line of railroad on UP's Elm Industrial Lead from milepost 461.5, near Middle Grove, to milepost 486.2, at Molitor Junction, in Fulton and Peoria Counties, Ill. Notice of the exemption was served on July 23, 2008, and published in the Federal Register on July 28, 2008 (73 Fed. Reg. 43,823). By decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) served on November 13, 2008, the proceeding was reopened and a 180-day period was authorized for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with UP for the right-of-way involved in this proceeding. By a series of decisions issued from May 11, 2009, to June 20, 2011, the NITU negotiating period was extended until November 13, 2011.

On October 28, 2011, IDNR filed a letter requesting a 180-day extension of the NITU negotiating period until May 11, 2012. IDNR states that it has completed work with local partner jurisdictions to satisfy its negotiating needs, and it has been in direct contact with UP, but it does not believe that the parties will be able to finalize negotiations during the current negotiating period. By letter filed on November 3, 2011, UP consents to IDNR's request to extend the NITU negotiating period until May 11, 2012.

Where, as here, the carrier is willing to continue trail use negotiations, the NITU negotiating period may be extended.¹ An extension of time will promote the establishment of trails and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d). Accordingly, the NITU negotiating period will be extended to May 11, 2012.

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

¹ See Rail Aban.—Use of Rights-of-Way as Trails—Supplemental Trails Act Procedures, 4 I.C.C.2d 152, 157-58 (1987).

It is ordered:

1. IDNR's request to extend the NITU negotiating period is granted.
2. The negotiating period under the NITU is extended until May 11, 2012.
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.