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SERVICE DATE – SEPTEMBER 10, 2003

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X)]

Norfolk Southern Railway Company–Abandonment Exemption–in Gaston County, NC

On August 21, 2003, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 to abandon a 5-mile portion of rail line extending between milepost HG-47.0 at Gastonia and milepost HG-52.0 at Dallas (Gebo), in Gaston County, NC. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 28052, 28053, 28054 and 28034 and includes stations at Gastonia and Dallas (Gebo).

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in NSR's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.–Abandonment–Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by December 9, 2003.

Any offer of financial assistance under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each offer must be accompanied by a \$1,100 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than September 30, 2003. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) James R. Paschall, Norfolk Southern Railway Company, Three Commercial Place, Norfolk, VA 23510. Replies to the NSR petition are due on or before September 30, 2003.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally

will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at  
“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: September 3, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary