

**32022**

**SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 7, 2001**

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**AB-565 (SUB-NO. 2X)  
NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES, LLC ABANDONMENT IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY,  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**AND**

**AB-55 (SUB-NO. 594X)  
CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC. DISCONTINUANCE OF SERVICE IN MIDDLESEX  
COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS**

### **BACKGROUND**

New York Central Lines, LLC (NYC) and CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) file this Notice of Exemption pursuant to the Board's regulations at 49 C.F.R. 1152.50. This Notice of Exemption filed by NYC and CSXT is for abandonment and discontinuance of service, respectively, of a line of railroad between Milepost QBH 2.60 near Sherborn and Milepost QBH 6.77 near Holliston, a distance of approximately 4.17 miles, in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Maps depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

There has been no originating or terminating traffic over this line segment for several years; the principle commodity transported over the line was chemicals. Abandonment and discontinuance of service will not effect existing regional or local transportation systems or patterns.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The railroad 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 investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have contacted appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included the Town of Holliston Planning Board, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Town of Sherborn,

Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection, National Geodetic Survey, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management.

## **CONDITIONS**

The Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has not yet completed their review of the proposed abandonment and discontinuance. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority, requiring the NYC to retain its interest in the line until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and subject to the recommended condition, 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**

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, 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 notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. 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 (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Phillis Johnson-Ball, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-565 (SUB-NO. 2X) And AB-55 (SUB-No. 594X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: 8/7/01.

**Comment due date: August 27, 2001.**

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

MAP NEEDS TO BE SCANNED.