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SERVICE DATE - JANUARY 15, 1999

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB Docket NO. AB-55 (SUB-NO. 568X)

CSX Transportation, Inc.--Abandonment
Exemption--in Franklin County, PA

January 12, 1999

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a portion of its Baltimore Service Lane, Lurgan Subdivision, between milepost BAV-20.5 at 4th Street and milepost BAV-22.4 at Commerce Street, a distance of 1.9 miles in Chambersburg, Franklin County, PA. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, 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 petition, CSXT states that there is only one shipper on the line, Chambersburg Engineering (CE) shipped six carloads of scrap, iron or steel in 1997. In 1995, 1996, and during the first nine months of 1998, CE did not ship or receive any carloads via rail. CSXT also states that following abandonment, overhead movement will be routed via trackage rights over Conrail trackage east of Chambersburg and CE will not lose rail service as a result of the abandonment. The line has been primarily used to handle overhead traffic to Franklin Storage, Inc. (FSI) and the

Letterkenny Army Depot at (Letterkenny). In 1996, FSI received 303 carloads of printing paper at its leased warehouse facility in Chambersburg. However, in late 1996, FSI begin receiving all of its rail shipments in Chambersburg at a CSXT served warehouse facility in the Chambersburg Industrial Park. FS also operates another warehouse facility in Chambersburg that is owned by Conrail. As a result, in 1997 and 1998, CSXT did not handle any shipments for FSI. CSXT states that in 1996 and 1997, it handled 218 and 189 rail shipments of ordinances or accessories to Letterkenny. During the first nine months of 1998, CSXT handled 105 shipments. CSXT also states that following abandonment all overhead traffic will be routed via trackage rights over Conrail trackage east of Chambersburg. The abandonment will eliminate nine at grade railroad crossing and thus improve public safety in the Borough. The right-of-way varies in width from 37 to 230 feet with the preponderance being 60 feet wide.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT 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. CSXT served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). Also, we have consulted with 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Region 3.

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 discontinuance would include denial (and, therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In this case, 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 not 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 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).

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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.

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 2215, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Ann Newman, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 568X)** in all correspondence addressed to the Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ann Newman at (202) 565-1629.

Date made available to the public: January 16, 1999.

Comment due date: February 16, 1999.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

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*****MAPHAS TO BE SCANNED*****