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SERVICE DATE - FEBRUARY 28, 2000

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-32 (Sub-No. 88X)]

Boston and Maine Corporation — Abandonment and Discontinuance of Service —

Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties, NH

On February 8, 2000, the Boston and Maine Corporation (B&M) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon and to discontinue service over a 2.95-mile line of railroad in Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties, NH, known as the Manchester and Lawrence Branch. Extending from milepost 4.65 to milepost 7.60 in Salem, NH, the line traverses U.S. Postal Service ZIP Code 03079 and includes the station of Salem, NH.

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

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in 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 May 26, 2000.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) 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 OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

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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 March 20, 2000. 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-32 (Sub-No. 88X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Robert B. Culliford, Esq., Law Department, Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, MA 01862. Replies to the B&M petition are due on or before March 20, 2000.

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) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available 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. Any other 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

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Decided: February 16, 2000.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary