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SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 18, 1997

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-497 (Sub-No. 2X)]

Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.--Abandonment Exemption--Between Redland Junction and Fertile, in Polk County, MN

On July 29, 1997, Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc. (MNN) 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 a line of railroad known as the Redland Junction-Fertile Line, extending from milepost 65.7 near Redland Junction, MN, to milepost 45.1 near Fertile, MN, which traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 56540 and 56716, a distance of 20.6 miles in Polk County, MN. The line includes the station of Fertile at milepost 45.1.

The line contains one parcel of federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. The interest of railroad employees will be protected by 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 November 14, 1997.

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 of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$900.

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 8, 1997. 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-497 (Sub-No. 2X) 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) Gary Laakso, Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc., 301 Yamato Road, Suite 1190, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

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 (202) 565-1695.]

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 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.

Decided: August 8, 1997.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary