

31762

SERVICE DATE - APRIL 11, 2001

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**NO. AB-468 (SUB-NO.4X)**

**Paducah and Louisville Railway, Inc. Abandonment Exemption In Hopkins County, KY**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, the Paducah and Louisville Railway (P&L) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of its railroad line. The line is located between milepost 154.5, near St. Charles, and milepost 159.6, near Ilsley, all in Hopkins County, KY. 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 abandon the line.

Abandonment of the line will result in the removal of the rail, crossties, other track material, and ballast. Maintenance of the line will cease. There are currently no plans to remove the bridge structures along the line.

**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. 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 Kentucky Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Cabinet Department of Environmental Protection; County Judge/Executive, County Courthouse; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region/Regional office; U.S. Army Engineer Distric - Louisville; National Park Service; U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Geodetic Survey; and Kentucky Heritage Council.

**TRAFFIC**

There has been no originating or terminating traffic on the line during the last two years and any overhead traffic on the line has been rerouted over another parallel line. No effect on existing regional or local transportation systems or patterns is anticipated.

## CONDITIONS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has not yet completed its Section 7 review. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority prohibiting the railroad from salvaging or disposing of the entire right-of-way until completion of the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531.

The Kentucky Historic Preservation Officer has not yet completed their review of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority, requiring the P& L 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 service on 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) or 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 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-468 (Sub-No. 4X) 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: 4/11/01

**Comment due date: 4/26/01 (15 days)**

By the Board, Vicki Rutson, Acting Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

MAP NEEDS TO BE SCANNED.