

33064

SERVICE DATE - NOVEMBER 22, 2002

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB DOCKET NO. AB-33 (Sub-No. 187X)

**Union Pacific Railroad Company - Abandonment Exemption - in Boone and Dallas Counties,
IA**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP or applicant) filed a petition for exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a 12.2-mile line of railroad in Boone and Dallas counties in Iowa. The rail line proposed for abandonment is known as the Ankeny Subdivision and extends from Milepost 341.1 near Slater to the end of the line at Milepost 353.5 near Woodward. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to this report. If the petition becomes effective, the applicant would be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The rail line proposed for abandonment is located in Boone and Dallas counties in central Iowa. The line extends from Milepost 341.1 near Slater to the end of the line at Milepost 353.5 near Woodward. The total length to be abandoned is 12.2 miles. The width of the right-of-way (ROW) is generally 100 feet. The topography varies from level to hilly and land use in the vicinity of the rail line is predominantly agricultural. There are no stations on the rail line. The line was acquired by the Chicago and North Western Railway Company in 1982 from the Milwaukee Road (i.e., the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad). The Chicago and North Western Railway Company merged with UP in 1995.

The applicant states that there are two structures on the rail line that are 50 years of age or older. The first is a 65-foot deck plate girder bridge that was built in 1938 at Milepost 342.90. The second is a 177-foot overhead highway bridge that was built in 1950 at Milepost 347.50, and because of active highway use, would need to be retained. The applicant does not consider either structure to be historically significant.

A 2500-foot steel bridge (i.e., the Ankeny Bridge) built in 1975 at Milepost 349.3 over the Des Moines River is a removable structure, and may be relocated to improve capacity elsewhere on the UP's rail system. The bridge rests on 22 piers that lie within the Des Moines River, river floodplain, and flood control pool of the Saylorville Reservoir.

West Central Cooperative at Woodward, Iowa has been the only active shipper on the subject rail line in the past two years. West Central Cooperative has shipped potassium chloride, urea, diammonium phosphate, and superphosphate on the line. In 2001, a total of 21 rail cars were moved for West Central Cooperative. The shipper does not oppose the abandonment and would move materials by truck if abandonment occurs. There is no overhead traffic on the line.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The applicant submitted environmental and historical reports that indicate that the quality of the human environment would not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities. The applicant served these reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's (Board) environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

The abandonment would not be expected to adversely affect the local or regional transportation networks. If abandonment occurs, the existing shipper at Woodward would need to move materials by truck. The closest rail point to Woodward would be at Perry on the UP system, approximately 10 miles west via state routes 210 and 141. Route 141 can also be used to access Interstates 35 and 80 in Des Moines, approximately 20 miles to the south. Based on the 1991 volume of 21 rail cars, and a truck to rail car ratio of four to one, the abandonment would result in the addition of only 168 loaded or empty trucks to the road network annually, or less than one truck per work day.

The proposed abandonment would not be expected to impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities. The minor diversion of commodities from rail to truck would not be expected to adversely impact air quality.

Noise emissions associated with rail removal and salvage operations would be temporary and would not be expected to have significant impacts on adjacent land uses.

In its response, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any objections to the proposed abandonment regarding threatened and endangered species, critical habitat, wildlife sanctuaries and refuges, National parks or forests.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) stated that the abandonment could benefit the state's trail network. IDNR noted that the western end of the rail line is near the Anderson Wildlife Management Area and crosses the Des Moines River near the Saylorville Reservoir and Saylorville Reservoir Wildlife Area. IDNR did not identify any specific concerns associated with protected species and rare natural communities. IDNR noted, however, that Federal and state permits may be required before abandonment can proceed, and we, therefore, recommend a condition to address this concern.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District (Corps), identified concerns associated with bridges including the Akeny Bridge over the Des Moines River. The Corps noted that potential navigation hazards could occur if the Akeny Bridge is retained and does not receive appropriate maintenance. The Corps also stated that if the steel structure of the Akeny Bridge is removed for use elsewhere by the UP, that the supporting piers must also be removed to avoid potential navigation hazards. The Corps indicated that the removal of any bridge from waters of the United States would require consultations concerning removal activities and permitting requirements. We recommend a condition to address the Corps concern regarding maintenance of the Akeny Bridge and a condition regarding the removal of any bridge from waters of the United States and associated permitting requirements.

The Corps also expressed concern regarding potential soil contamination associated with the portion of the rail line embankment located within the Saylorville Reservoir flood control pool area and vicinity. The Corps' concern is with the potential release of soil contaminants if the embankment is disturbed or removed. We recommend a condition to address this concern.

The National Geodetic Survey has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment and whether geodetic markers could be disturbed, and we, therefore, recommend a condition to address this concern.

The State Historical Society of Iowa (IA State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) has not completed its assessment of the potential impact of this project on historic resources, and we, therefore, recommend a condition to address this concern.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. The applicant shall consult with the IDNR to determine what permits may be required before abandonment activities can proceed.
2. If the Akeny Bridge is retained, the applicant shall consult with the Corps regarding maintenance requirements of the bridge to address that agency's concern of potential navigation hazards that could develop as the bridge structure ages.
3. For any bridge that will be removed from waters of the United States including the Akeny Bridge, the applicant shall consult with the Corps regarding the need to remove piers and footings that could result in navigation hazards if left in place, and to review associated permitting requirements with that agency.

4. The applicant shall consult with the Corps if the rail line embankment in the vicinity of the Saylorville Reservoir is to be removed or disturbed to address that agency's concern that the disturbance of the embankment could result in the release of soil contaminants that may be present.
5. The applicant shall retain the integrity of the rail line until the National Geodetic Survey has completed its review of the abandonment proposal and determined if any geodetic markers could be adversely affected.
6. The applicant shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the ROW 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, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line would 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 ROW may be suitable for other public uses. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Surface Transportation 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 Surface Transportation Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 20 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 ROWs 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 the 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 Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of David Navecky, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 187X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board. Questions regarding this environmental assessment should be referred to David Navecky at 202-565-1593 (naveckyd@stb.dot.gov).**

Date made available to the public: November 22, 2002.

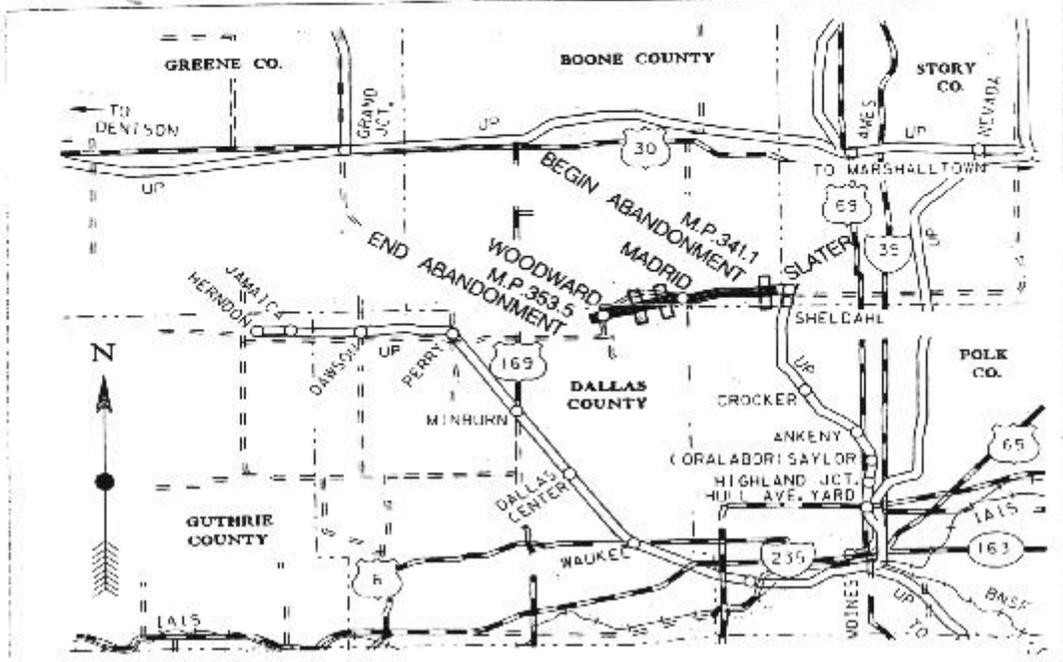
Comment due date: **December 20, 2002.**

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

TD-33064



STB DOCKET NO. AB-33 (Sub-No. 187X)
Union Pacific Railroad Company - Abandonment Exemption - in Boone and Dallas
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STATION	MILE POST	AGENCY
WARD	346.00	MO
WOODWARD	351.00	MO

BRIDGE NO.	BRIDGE TYPE	TOTAL LENGTH	DATE
BR 342.00	1 - 65' DECK PLATE GIRDER	65'	1934
BR 347.30	1 - 177' OVERHEAD HIGHWAY BRIDGE (UPPER VIADUCT)	177'	1950
BR 348.30	75 - 128' DECK PLATE GIRDERS	2,300'	1975

* NOTE: BRIDGE LESS THAN 50 YEARS OLD.

- LEGEND**
- RR LINES TO BE ABANDONED
 - OTHER UPRR LINES
 - OTHER RAILROADS
 - 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES
 - PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS
 - OTHER ROADS

Ankeny Subdivision
 M.P. 341.1 TO M.P. 353.5 (SECTION 340.4 - 346.0)
 ANKENY SUBDIVISION - A TOTAL OF 12.2 MILES
 IN BOONE & DALLAS COUNTIES, IOWA
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
ANKENY SUBDIVISION
 INCL. 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES



JULY 18, 2002

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