





29069

**SERVICE DATE - MAY 27, 1998**  
**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
**WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

NO. AB-493 (SUB-NO.7X)

**TRACK TECH, INC.**  
**ABANDONMENT AND DISCONTINUANCE BETWEEN**  
**CRESTON AND GREENFIELD, IOWA**  
**IN ADAIR AND UNION COUNTIES, IOWA**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, Track Tech, Inc. 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 its railroad line located between milepost 1.45 near Creston, Iowa and Milepost 21.15 at the end of the line in or near Greenfield, Iowa, all within Adair and Union Counties, Iowa, a distance of 19.70 miles. 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**

There are three shippers located on the Line: Green Valley Chemical; Rolling Hills Farm Service, and Farmers Cooperative Company. The line formerly was owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Company ("BNSF"). The line was sold by BNSF to the Petitioner on or about June 11, 1997. The line was taken out of service and embargoed by BNSF at the end of February, 1997. During the last full year of operation by BNSF in 1996, shipper use of the line was sporadic and minimal. Only 82 cars were moved in 1996 with 27 cars of fertilizer received inbound at Orient and Greenfield and 55 cars of grain and anhydrous ammonia forwarded off the line. The right-of-way is generally less than 100 feet wide. It is located entirely within Adair and Union Counties, Iowa, which have a combined population of approximately 20,837.

**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 or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. 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 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 State of Iowa, Department of Economic Development, State Historical Society of Iowa, Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, the National Geodetic Survey, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

#### **CONDITIONS**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified 9 geodetic station markers along the rail line and requests 90 days notice to plan relocation of any markers which may be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **Track Tech, Inc. shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey and provide NGS with 90 days notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers.**

#### **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 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), 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**

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, 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 the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, 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).

#### **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 Assistance, Room 4412, Washington, DC 20423.

#### **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Scott Decker, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-493 (Sub No.7X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Scott Decker at (202) 565-1531.

Date made available to the public: **May 21, 1998.**

**Comment due date: June 19, 1998.**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP