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SERVICE DATE - SEPTEMBER 20, 2001

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**DOCKET NO. AB-550 (Sub. No. 1X) - R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Allentown Lines, Inc. - Abandonment Exemption - In Lebanon County, Pennsylvania**

**BACKGROUND**

In the above entitled proceeding, R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Allentown Lines, Inc. (RJC�) 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 (1) the Cornwall Industrial Track between approximately milepost 0.9 and approximately milepost 3.66; and (2) the Lebanon Industrial Track between approximately milepost 18 and approximately milepost 18.6, a total distance of approximately 3.36 miles, in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice 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**

According to RJC�, there has been no local traffic on the line for two years. RJC� states in the abandonment notice that no formal complaint has been filed by any rail user in the area. RJC� also states that the Lebanon Valley Rails-to-Trails has indicated interest in utilizing the subject line as a rails-to-trails property.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

RJC� 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. RJC� served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

**CONDITIONS**

The US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, has advised us that some areas near the eastern end of the line are Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance and could be negatively affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend the following condition be placed on any grant of abandonment authority:

**Prior to any salvage operations, JRCN shall consult with the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania office of the Natural Resources Conservation, US Department of Agriculture, to develop methods for salvage operations that will be consistent with the protection of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance.**

The National Geodetic Survey has identified two geodetic station markers on the line that may be adversely affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend the following condition be placed on any grant of abandonment authority:

**The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified 2 geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, JRCN shall notify NGS at least 90 days prior to any salvage activities that may disturb or destroy these markers so that plans can be made for their relocation.**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, and subject to the recommended mitigation conditions, 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**

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 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 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 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 Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-550 (Sub No. 1X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board. Questions regarding this environmental assessment should be referred to Dana White at (202) 565-1552.**

Date made available to the public: September 21,2001.

Comment due date: **October 5, 2001 (15 days).**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

MAP TO BE SCANNED