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SERVICE DATE - JULY 20, 1998

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-547X]

Roaring Fork Railroad Holding Authority--Abandonment Exemption--in Garfield, Eagle and Pitkin Counties, CO

On June 30, 1998, Roaring Fork Railroad Holding Authority (RFRHA) 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. 10903-10905<sup>1</sup> to abandon its line of railroad known as the Aspen Branch, extending from milepost 360.22 near Glenwood Springs to the end of the line at milepost 393.66 near Woody Creek, a total distance of approximately 33.44 miles in Garfield, Eagle and Pitkin Counties, CO. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 81601, 81602, 81621, 81623, 81628, 81654 and 81656. There are no stations on the line.

The line contains federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in RFRHA's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in 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 October 16, 1998.

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<sup>1</sup> RFRHA seeks exemptions from the offer of financial assistance (OFA) provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10904 and the public use provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10905. These exemption requests will be addressed in the final decision.

Unless an exemption is granted from the OFA provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10904, any OFA 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 OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,000 filing fee. 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. Unless an exemption is granted from the public use provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10905, 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 August 10, 1998.<sup>2</sup> 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-547X 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) Charles H. Montange, 426 NW 162d Street, Seattle, WA 98177.

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.]

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<sup>2</sup> Included in its petition is a request by RFRHA to railbank the line and a statement of its willingness to assume full responsibility for the management and use of the right-of-way and for the payment of taxes and other liabilities. This request by RFRHA to railbank its own line will be addressed in the final decision.

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 made 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.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at  
“[WWW.STB.DOT.GOV](http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV).”

Decided: July 14, 1998.

By the Board, Joseph H. Dettmar, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary