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SERVICE DATE - OCTOBER 19, 2001

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AB- 55 (SUB-NO. 598X)

CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC. ABANDONMENT IN GREENBRIER COUNTY,  
WEST VIRGINIA

### BACKGROUND

CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX) filed a notice of exemption pursuant to the Board's regulations at 49 CFR 1152.50. The notice of exemption is for abandonment of CSXT's line of railroad between Rupert Junction at milepost CAH-7.2 and Clearco at milepost CAH-20.8, a distance of approximately 13.6 miles in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. 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.

### 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 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 : Department of Natural Resources, Department of Culture and History, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Coastal Zone Management, and State Rail Authority and Development Office.

### TRANSPORTATION

Traffic has not moved over this line for two years. Accordingly, there will be no diversion of rail traffic to motor carriage.

## **RESOURCES**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers advised that provided the work is accomplished in the manner described in the Environmental Report, no permit would be required.

## **CONDITIONS**

The West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) 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 CSX 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. As a result of its review, the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified five geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. If there are any planned activities which could disturb or destroy these markers, NGS requires not less than 90 days' notification in advance of such activities in order to plan for their relocation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and subject to the recommended conditions, 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**

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- 55 (598X) 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: October 19, 2001.

**Comment due date: November 5, 2001.**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

MAP NEEDS TO BE SCANNED.