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SERVICE DATE - JULY 14, 1997

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-501 (SUB-NO. 1X)

**Longhorn Railway Company
Discontinuance Exemption in
Burnet County, Texas**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Longhorn Railway Company (LHRR) has filed an exemption petition in connection with the discontinuance of service on a line of railroad known as the Burnet City spur in the City of Austin, Texas' Llano to Giddings Rail Line, extending near milepost 59.9 to the end of the rail line in the City of Burnet, Burnet County, Texas. The line is approximately one quarter mile long. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to this report. LHRR plans to salvage tracks and ties if discontinuance is approved.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

LHRR seeks to discontinue service because, as stated in the application, the only shipper on the line has requested a new rail connection to its facilities, leaving the current connection unnecessary. Further, LHRR states that the adjacent landowners have agreed to the proposed disposition of the right-of-way which will eliminate a dangerous highway crossing and free the property for commercial development.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

LHRR has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the discontinuance or any post-discontinuance 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 and verified the information contained in the environmental report.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, discontinuance of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Since the only shipper on the line has requested a new connection to its facilities, and since there appears to be no other rail customers planning to use the rail line, alternatives to the proposed discontinuance, such as denial, are not practical.

PUBLIC USE

Following discontinuance 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 responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, 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, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-501 (Sub No. 1X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Dana White at (202) 565-1552.

Date made available to the public: July 14, 1997.

Comment due date: August 12,1997. (30 Days)

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment