

SERVICE DATE - JUNE 3, 1998

29090

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-33 (SUB-NO. 120X)

Union Pacific Railroad Company
--Abandonment and Discontinuance of Operations Exemption--
Warren County, IA

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) 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 known as the Carlisle Branch located between milepost 368.3 near Carlisle to milepost 379.13 near Indianola, a distance of 10.83 miles, and the discontinuance of operations over the end segment of track between milepost 379.13 and 379.98 at Indianola, a distance of .85 mile (a total distance of 11.68 miles) in Warren County, Iowa. 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 two active shippers located on the line proposed for abandonment: Heartland Coop and Jerico Services. In 1996, the two shippers transported a total of 20 carloads of chemicals. In 1997, that total increased to 21. In the forecast year of March 1, 1998 through February 28, 1999, UP projects that the two shippers would transport 21 carloads of chemicals.

According to UP, train service is provided on the line on an as needed basis, which typically does not exceed more than once per month. The present rail traffic could be trucked over U.S. Highway 69, which runs north-south, or State Highway 92, which runs east-west. Both highways serve Indianola.

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 the U.S. Army Engineer District in Chicago; Region 7 of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3; State Historical Society of Iowa; and the Mayor's Office of Indianola.

The State Historical Society of Iowa has not yet completed its review pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Therefore, **we recommend that UP retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the 12 bridges on the line that are 50 years old or older until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified one geodetic station marker that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, **we recommend that UP provide a minimum of 90 days notice to NGS before engaging in salvage activities on the line proposed for abandonment.**

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

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may not be suitable for other public use. In its petition for abandonment, UP states that the line is probably not

be suitable for public use because it believes the area is already adequately served by existing roads and utility lines. 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 Services, Room 848, 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, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Victoria Rutson, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-33 (Sub No. 120X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ms. Rutson at (202) 565-1545.

Date made available to the public: May 29, 1998.

Comment due date: June 26.

Board decisions and notices are available on its website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP