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November 30, 2011

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Director, Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
DEC 20 2011
Part of
Public Record

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.*
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT.

Dear Ms. Rutson:

On or about December 20, 2011 we expect to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board (“STB”) a notice of exemption seeking authority CSO to abandon 2.4 miles of line milepost 2.0 and milepost 4.4, on Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.’s (“CSO”) Suffield Subdivision in Hartford County, CT (“Line”).

Enclosed for electronic filing is the Combined Environmental and Historic Report (“CEHR”) describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and historic effects, as well as maps of the affected area. The CEHR was mailed via first class mail or sent electronically to the parties required under 49 C.F.R. § 1105.7 and 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c) on November 30, 2011.

Sincerely yours,

Melanie B. Yasbin
Attorney for Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.

Enclosure

COMBINED ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC REPORT
(49 C.F.R. 1105.7 and 1105.8)

Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X)

**CONNECTICUT SOUTHERN RAILROAD, INC.—
ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—
IN HARTFORD COUNTY, CT**

Dated: November 30, 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

(1) Proposed Action and Alternatives. Describe the proposed action, including commodities transported, the planned disposition (if any) of any rail line and other structures that may be involved, and any possible changes in current operations or maintenance practices. Also describe any reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Include a readable, detailed map and drawings clearly delineating the project.

Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc. ("CSO") proposes to abandon a 2.4-mile railroad line between milepost 2.0 and milepost 4.4 on its Suffield Subdivision in Hartford County, CT (the "Line").

Abandonment of the Line will result in the removal of the rail, crossties and possibly the upper layer of ballast. Removal of the Line will result in the elimination of 3 public road crossings on the Line.

There has been no traffic on the Line for over 2 years.

The only alternative to a full abandonment would be for CSO not to abandon the Line. The Line is located in an area of little economic growth, where industrial development is unlikely to occur. With little, if any, potential traffic, CSO has decided to seek abandonment of the Line.

A map of the proposed abandonment is attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

(2) Transportation System. Describe the effects of the proposed action on regional or local transportation systems and patterns. Estimate the amount of traffic (passenger or freight) that will be diverted to other transportation systems or modes as a result of the proposed action.

There is no passenger traffic on the Line to be diverted to other modes as a result of the proposed abandonment. There is no freight traffic on the Line to be diverted to motor carrier. Accordingly, the proposed abandonment should have no adverse effects on regional or local transportation systems and patterns.

(3) Land Use. (i) Based on consultation with local and/or regional planning agencies and/or a review of the official planning documents prepared by such agencies, state whether the proposed action is consistent with existing land use plans. Describe any inconsistencies. (ii) Based on consultation with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, state the effect of the proposed action on any prime agricultural land. (iii) If the action affects land or water uses within a designated coastal zone, include the coastal zone information required by 1105.9. (iv) If the proposed action is an abandonment, state whether or not the right-of-way is suitable for alternative public use under 49 U.S.C. § 10905 and explain why.

(i) CSO considers the proposed abandonment to be consistent with existing land use plans. The area surrounding the Line is primarily rural in nature.

CSO contacted the Town of Suffield by letter dated November 30, 2011. See Exhibit 2. No response has been received as of this date. A copy of this Environmental Report has been mailed to the appropriate local and state agencies for their information and further comment.

(ii) CSO does not believe that there is any prime agricultural land that will be affected. CSO notified the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") Natural Resources Conservation Service (the agency succeeding to the responsibilities of the Soil Conservation Service) of the proposed abandonment by letter dated November 30, 2011, and requested assistance in identifying any potential effects on prime agricultural land. See Exhibit 2. A copy of this report has been supplied to the USDA for its information and further comment.

(iii) The Line passes through a designated coastal zone. A copy of this report has been supplied to the Office of Long Island Sound Programs, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse.

(iv) CSO believes the Line would be suitable for interim trail use/rail banking.

(4) Energy. (i) Describe the effect of the proposed action on transportation of energy resources. (ii) Describe the effect of the proposed action on recyclable commodities. (iii) State whether the proposed action will result in an increase or decrease in overall energy efficiency and explain why. (iv) If the proposed action will cause diversions from rail to motor carriage of more than: (A) 1,000 rail carloads a year; or (B) an average of 50 rail carloads per mile per year for any part of the affected line, quantify the resulting net change in energy consumption and show the data and methodology used to arrive at the figure given.

(i) The proposed abandonment will have no effect on the transportation of energy resources.

(ii) The proposed abandonment will have no effect on the transportation of recyclable commodities.

(iii) The proposed abandonment will have minimal effect on overall energy efficiency since there has been no traffic on the Line.

(iv) The proposed abandonment will not cause the diversion of more than 1,000 rail carloads a year; or an average of 50 rail carloads per mile per year for any part of the line segments of rail traffic to motor carriage.

(5) Air. (i) If the proposed action will result in either: (A) An increase in rail traffic of at least 100 percent (measured in gross ton miles annually) or an increase of at least eight trains a day on any segment of rail line affected by the proposal, or (B) an increase in rail yard activity of at least 100 percent (measured by carload activity), or (C) an average increase in truck traffic of more than 10 percent of the average daily traffic or 50 vehicles a day on any affected road segment, quantify the anticipated effect on air emissions. For a proposal under 49 U.S.C. § 10901 (or § 10505) to construct a new line or reinstitute service over a previously abandoned line, only the eight train a day provision in sub-section (5)(i)(A) will apply. (ii) If the proposed action affects a class I or nonattainment area under the Clean Air Act, and will result in either: (A) an increase in rail traffic of at least 50 percent (measured in gross ton miles annually) or an increase of at least three trains a day on any segment of rail line; (B) an increase in rail yard activity of at least 20 percent (measured by carload activity); or (C) an average increase in truck

traffic of more than 10 percent of the average daily traffic or 50 vehicles a day on a given road segment, then state whether any expected increased emissions are within the parameters established by the State Implementation Plan. However, for a rail construction under 49 U.S.C. § 10901 (or 49 U.S.C. § 10505), or a case involving the reinstatement of service over a previously abandoned line, only the three train a day threshold in this item shall apply. (iii) If transportation of ozone depleting materials (such as nitrogen oxide and freon) is contemplated, identify: the materials and quantity; the frequency of service; safety practices (including any speed restrictions); the applicant's safety record (to the extent available) on derailments, accidents and spills; contingency plans to deal with accidental spills; and the likelihood of an accidental release of ozone depleting materials in the event of a collision or derailment.

(i) The proposed abandonment will not result in meeting or exceeding the specified thresholds.

(ii) The proposed abandonment will not result in meeting or exceeding the specified thresholds.

(iii) The proposed abandonment will not affect the transportation of ozone depleting materials.

(6) Noise. If any of the thresholds identified in item (5)(i) of this section are surpassed, state whether the proposed action will cause: (i) an incremental increase in noise levels of three decibels Ldn or more; or (ii) an increase to a noise level of 65 decibels Ldn or greater. If so, identify sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, libraries, hospitals, residences, retirement communities, and nursing homes) in the project area, and quantify the noise increase for these receptors if the thresholds are surpassed.

Not applicable.

(7) Safety. (i) Describe any effects of the proposed action on public health and safety (including vehicle delay time at railroad grade crossings). (ii) If hazardous materials are expected to be transported, identify: the materials and quantity; the frequency of service; whether chemicals are being transported that, if mixed, could react to form more hazardous compounds; safety practices (including any speed restrictions); the applicant's safety record (to the extent available) on derailments, accidents and hazardous spills; the contingency plans to deal with accidental spills; and the likelihood of an accidental release of hazardous materials. (iii) If there are any known hazardous waste sites or sites where there have been known hazardous materials spills on the right-of-way, identify the location of those sites and the types of hazardous materials involved.

(i) The proposed abandonment will have no detrimental effects on public health and safety. CSO has not operated over the Line in more than two years.

(ii) The proposed abandonment will not affect the transportation of hazardous materials.

(iii) CSO is not aware of any known hazardous waste sites or sites where there have been known hazardous materials spills on the Line.

(8) Biological Resources. (i) Based on consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state whether the proposed action is likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as a critical habitat, and if so, describe the effects. (ii) State whether wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests will be affected, and describe any effects.

(i) CSO does not believe that the proposed action is likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as a critical habitat. CSO notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("USF&W") of the proposed abandonment by letter dated November 30, 2011, and requested assistance in determining whether the proposed abandonment will adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as a critical habitat. *See Exhibit 2.* A copy of this Report was supplied to the USF&W for its information and further comment.

(ii) While Stony Brook Park is near the Line, CSO does not believe any wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests would be adversely affected by the proposed abandonment.

CSO notified the National Parks Service of the proposed abandonment by letter dated November 30, 2011, and requested assistance in identifying any potential effects on wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests. *See Exhibit 2.* To date, no response to this request has been received. A copy of this Report has been supplied to the National Park Service for its information and comment:

(9) Water. (i) Based on consultation with State water quality officials, state whether the proposed action is consistent with applicable Federal, State or local water quality standards. Describe any inconsistencies. (ii) Based on consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state whether permits under section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344) are required for the proposed action and whether any designated wetlands or 100-year flood plains will be

affected. Describe the effects. (iii) State whether permits under section 402 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1342) are required for the proposed action.

(i) CSO is confident that the proposed abandonment will be consistent with applicable water quality standards. CSO contacted the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection ("CDEP") and the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("USEPA") by letters dated November 30, 2011. *See* Exhibit 2. To date, no response to this request has been received. A copy of this Report has been supplied to the CDEP and USEPA for their information and comment.

(ii) CSO believes that no permits under section 404 of the Clean Water Act are required for the proposed abandonment and that no designated wetlands or 100-year flood plains will be affected by the proposed abandonment. Upon receiving abandonment authority, removal of material will be accomplished by use of the right-of-way for access, along with existing public crossings. No new access roads are contemplated. CSO does not intend to disturb any of the underlying roadbed or perform any activities that would cause sedimentation or erosion of the soil, and does not anticipate any dredging or use of fill in the removal of the track material. The crossties and/or other debris will be transported away from the Line and will not be discarded along the right-of-way nor be placed or left in streams or wetlands, or along the banks of such waterways. Also, during track removal, appropriate measures will be implemented to prevent or control spills from fuels, lubricants or any other pollutant materials from entering any waterways. Based upon this course of action, CSO does not believe a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be required.

CSO contacted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by letter dated November 30, 2011 and has received no response to date. *See* Exhibit 2. A copy of this Report has been supplied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for its information and comment.

(iii) CSO believes that no permit under section 402 of the Clean Water Act would be required for the abandonment. CSO contacted the CDEP and the USEPA by letter dated November XX, 2011. See Exhibit 2. A copy of this Report has been supplied to the CDEP and USEPA for their information and further comment.

(10) Proposed Mitigation. Describe any actions that are proposed to mitigate adverse environmental impacts, indicating why the proposed mitigation is appropriate.

CSO does not expect any adverse environmental impact from the proposed abandonment and, therefore, sees no need for any mitigating actions. CSO will, of course, adhere to any remedial actions required by the Board.

HISTORIC REPORT

1. A U.S.G.S. topographic map (or alternate map drawn to scale and sufficiently detailed to show buildings and other structures in the vicinity of the proposed action) showing the location of the proposed action, and the locations and approximate dimensions of railroad structures that are 50 years old or older and are part of the proposed action;

U.S. Geological Survey Maps have been supplied to the Connecticut Historic Preservation Office. *See Exhibit 3:*

2. A written description of the right of way (including approximate widths, to the extent known), and the topography and urban and/or rural characteristics of the surrounding area;

The 2.4 mile right-of-way averages 80 feet wide and consists of 22.85 of land. The Line begins at milepost 2.0 just west of S. Main St. The Line moves northwest, crossing over Suffield St. North of Suffield St. the Line turns due north crossing South St. (State Highway 75) and running along Stony Brook Park crossing over Stony Brook west of Cains Pond and ending at milepost 4.4, just south of Mountain Rd.

3. Good quality photographs (actual photographic prints, not photocopies) of railroad structures on the property that are 50 years old or older and of the immediately surrounding area;

There are 2 bridges on the property that are 50 years old or older. CSO intends to leave the ballast, bridges, and culverts intact for trail use. Therefore, CSO will not be removing any of the bridges on the Line. CSO will only remove the track and materials from the bridges, but will leave the bridges in place for trail use. *See Exhibit 4* for photographs.

4. The date(s) of construction of the structure(s), and the date(s) and extent of any major alterations, to the extent such information is known;

CSO does not know the dates of construction for the 2 bridges. The Bridge at milepost 2.79 crosses Suffield St. and the other Bridge crosses Stony Brook west of Cains Pond. CSO believes the bridges are typical and not historically significant.

5. A brief narrative history of carrier operations in the area, and an explanation of what, if any, changes are contemplated as a result of the proposed action;

The last shipper on the Line, Loreno Lumber has not used the Line since July of 2009. CSO has not served any shippers on the Line since July of 2009. The proposed abandonment will not result in a change of operation since there is no demand for rail service. CSO expects to salvage the track and materials.

CSO acquired the Line from Consolidated Rail Corporation in September 1996.¹

6. A brief summary of documents in the carrier's possession, such as engineering drawings, that might be useful in documenting a structure that is found to be historic;

CSO possesses valuation maps and track charts of the Line, but is not aware of any other documentation in its possession.

7. An opinion (based on readily available information in the railroad's possession) as to whether the site and/or structures meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (36 C.F.R. 60.4), and whether there is a likelihood of archeological resources or any other previously unknown historic properties in the project area, and the basis for these opinions (including any consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office, local historical societies or universities);

CSO believes that there are no archeological resources or other railroad related historic properties in the project area.

8. A description (based on readily available information in the railroad's possession) of any known prior subsurface ground disturbance or fill, environmental conditions (naturally occurring or manmade) that might affect the archeological recovery of resources (such as swampy conditions or the presence of toxic waste), and the surrounding terrain.

Based on a review of its records, CSO believes that there are no known subsurface ground disturbances or fill, or environmental conditions that might affect the archeological recovery of any potential resources.

9. Within 30 days of receipt of the historic report, the State Historic Preservation Officer may request the following additional information regarding specific non railroad owned

¹ *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Lines of Consolidated Rail Corporation*, STB Finance Docket No. 33120 (STB served Sept 27, 1996)

properties or groups of properties immediately adjacent to the railroad right-of-way: photographs of specified properties that can be readily seen from the railroad right-of-way (or other public rights-of-way adjacent to the property) and a written description of any previously discovered archeological sites, identifying the location and type of the site (*i.e.* prehistoric or native American).

CSO does not foresee the likelihood that any additional information will need to be supplied in association with the proposed abandonment other than that information previously submitted. But, if any additional information is requested, CSO will promptly supply the necessary information.

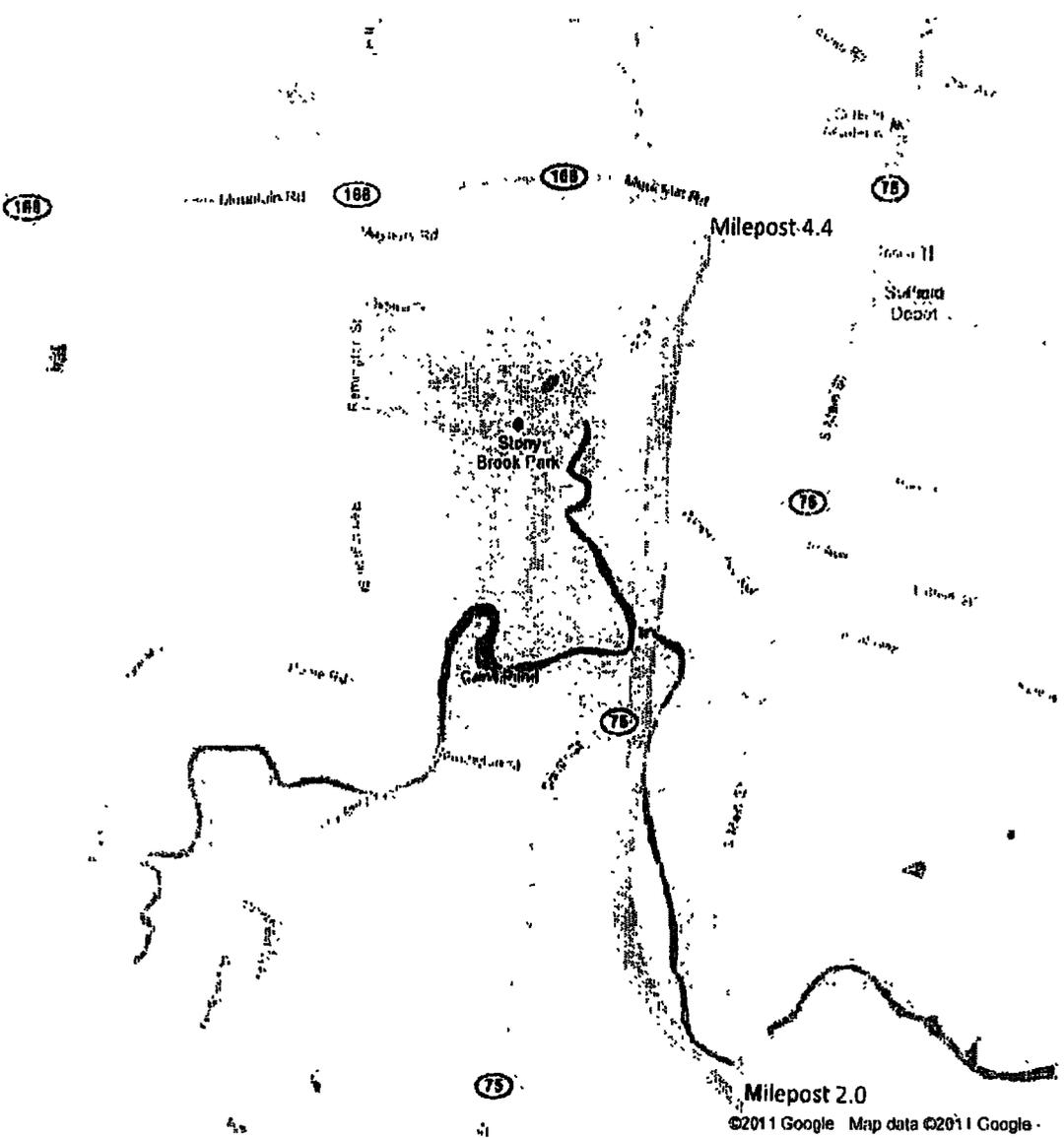
CSO contacted the Connecticut Historic Preservation Office ("CHPO") See Exhibit 2. No response has been received. A copy of this Report has been mailed to CHPO.

EXHIBIT 1 – MAP



Address Suffield, CT

Get Google Maps on your phone
 Text the word "GMAPS" to 466453

©2011 Google Map data ©2011 Google

EXHIBIT 2 – LETTERS

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November 30, 2011

Connecticut Intergovernmental Review Coordinator Budget and Financial Division
Office of Policy Management
450 Capital Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1308

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

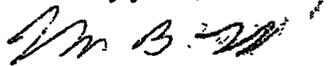
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Attached is a Combined Environmental and Historic Report describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and historic effects, as well as maps of the affected area. We are providing this report so that you may review the information that will form the basis for the STB's independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. If any of the information is misleading or incorrect, if you believe that pertinent information is missing, or if you have any questions about the STB's environmental review process, please contact the Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA), Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423, telephone 202-245-0295 and refer to the above Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X).

Because the applicable statutes and regulations impose stringent deadlines for processing this action, your written comments to OEA (with a copy to our representative) would be appreciated within 3 weeks. Your comments will be considered by the STB in evaluating the environmental impacts of the contemplated action. If there are any questions concerning this proposal, please contact our representative directly. Our representative in this matter is Melanie B. Yasbin who may be contacted by telephone at 410-296-2205, email at Melanie@lgraillaw.com, or mail at Law Offices of Louis E. Gitomer, LLC, 600 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 301, Towson, MD 21204.

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November 30, 2011

Natural Resources Conservation Service
344 Marrow Road
Tolland, CT 06084

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

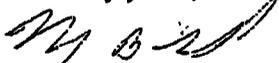
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November 30, 2011

Coastal Management Program
Office of Long Island Sound Programs
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Department of Environmental Protection
70 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

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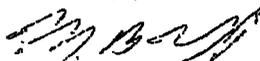
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Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Long Island Sound Program 79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

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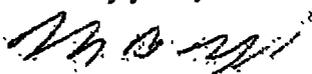
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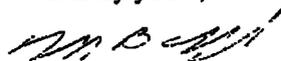
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Melanie B. Yasbin
Attorney for Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.

Enclosures

LAW OFFICES OF
LOUIS E. GITOMER, LLC.

LOUIS E. GITOMER
Lou@lgraillaw.com

600 BALTIMORE AVENUE, SUITE 301
TOWSON, MARYLAND 21204-4022
(410) 296-2250 • (202) 466-6532
FAX (410) 332-0885

MELANIE B. YASBIN
Melanie@lgraillaw.com
410-296-2205

November 30, 2011

EPA
Region I
1 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02114-2032

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

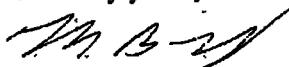
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November 30, 2011

U.S. National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House 200 Chestnut Street, Fifth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
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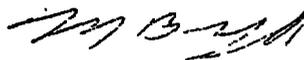
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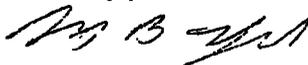
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November 30, 2011

Connecticut Historical Commission
Commission on Culture & Tourism
State Historic Preservation Office
One Constitution Plaza, Second Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

**RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT**

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MELANIE B. YASBIN
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410-296-2205

November 30, 2011

Town of Suffield
First Selectman Tom Frenaye
83 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT 06078

RE: Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X) *Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

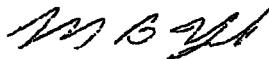
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November 30, 2011

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
New England District
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

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November 30, 2011

U.S. National Geodetic Survey
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Geodetic Services Division
Room 9292, NGS/12
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

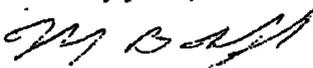
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November 30, 2011

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
300 West Gate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

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Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, CT*

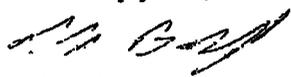
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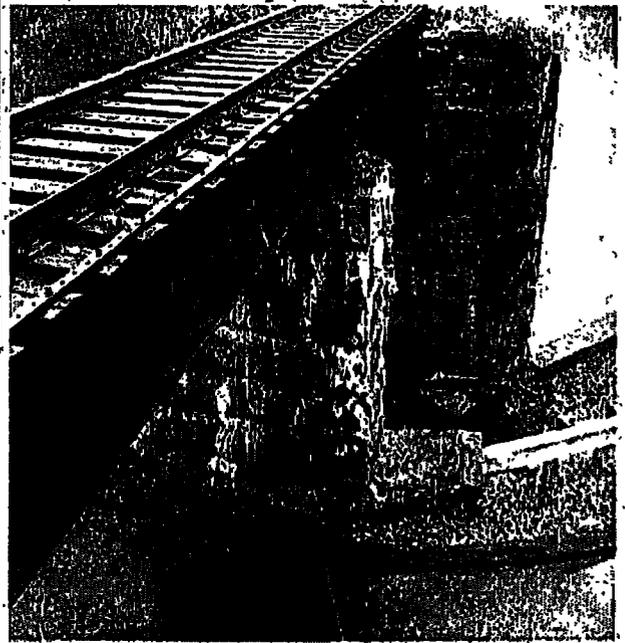
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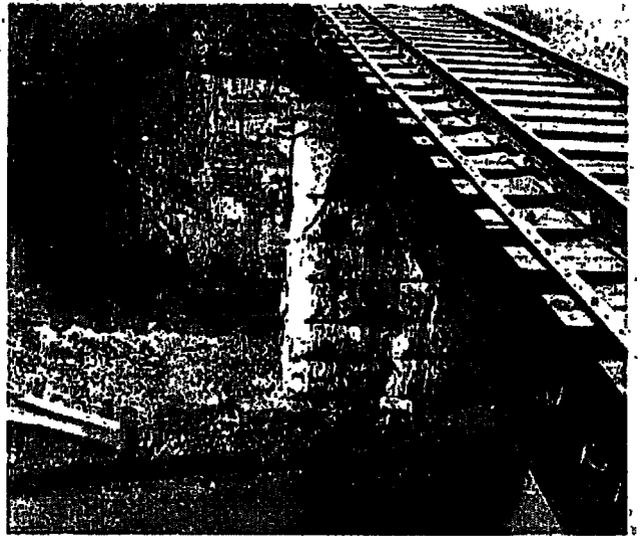
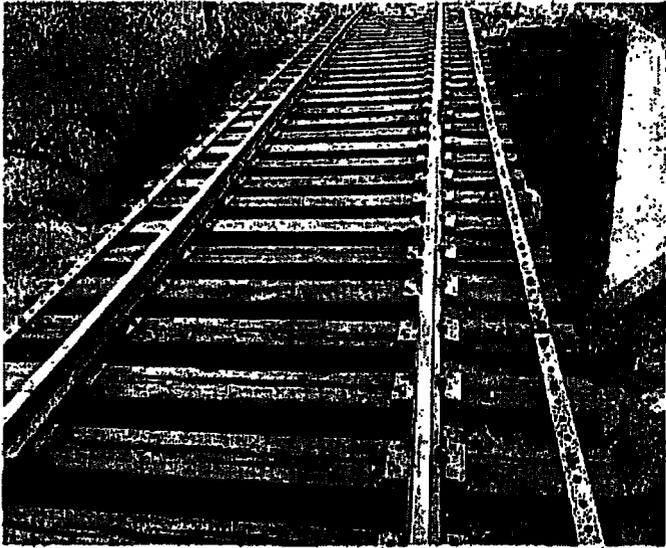
EXHIBIT 3 – USGS MAP

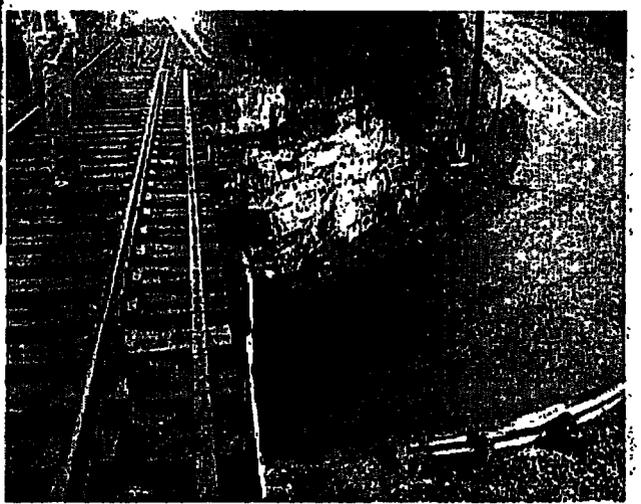
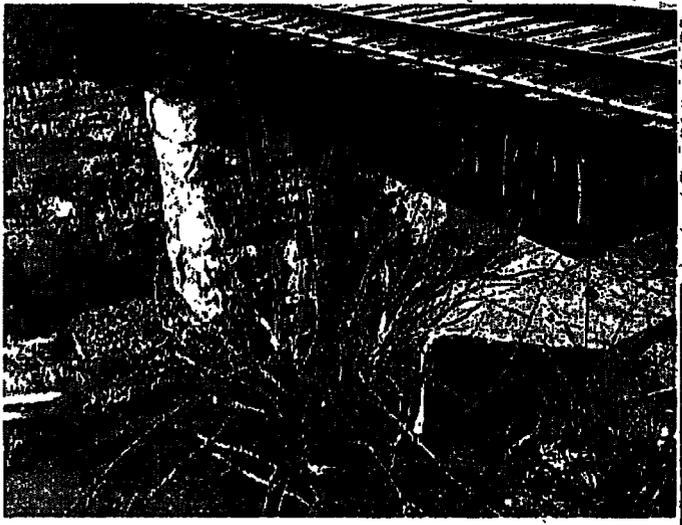
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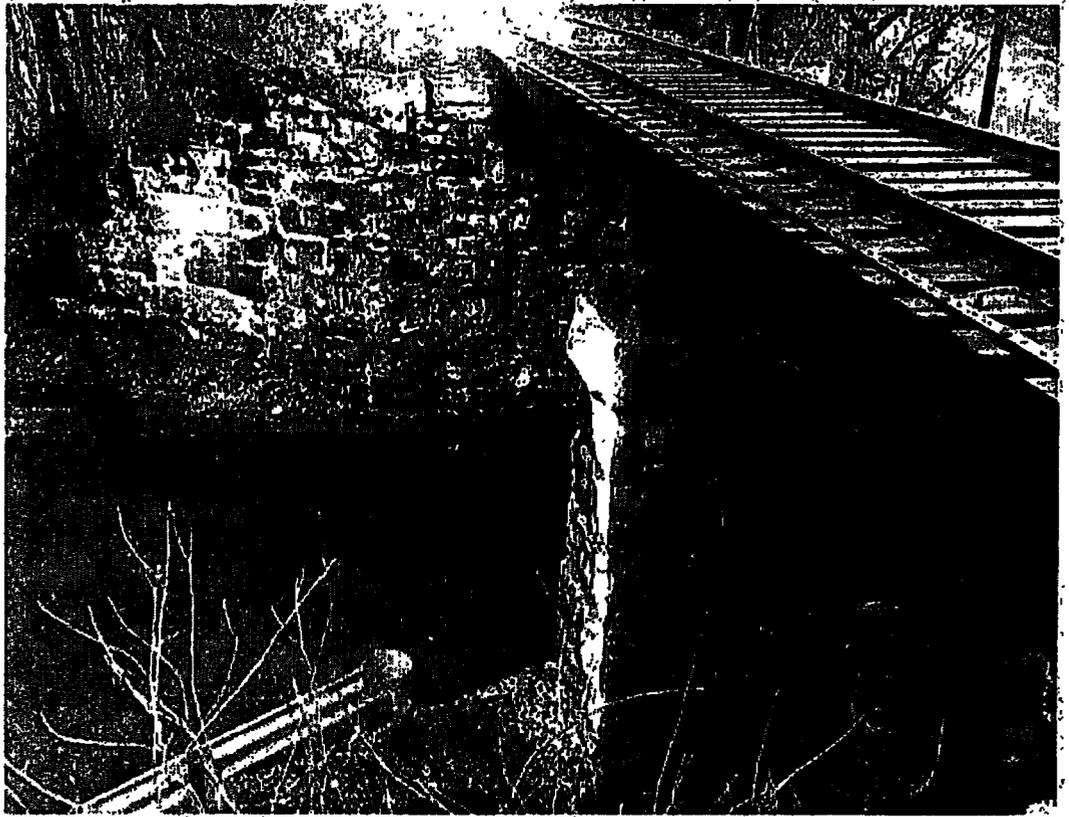
Bridge #1

41 57' 19 N / 72 39' 16 W









Bridge #2
41 58' 27 N/72 39' 27 W

