

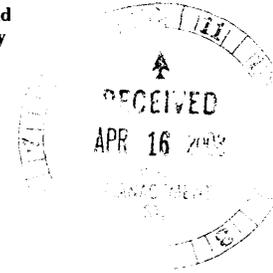
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**VIA UPS OVERNIGHT MAIL**

April 15, 2003

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

**Re: Surface Transportation Board Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 395X); The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company ("BNSF") Abandonment between Columbus, Kansas and Carthage, Missouri**

Dear Secretary Williams:

On May 3, 2002, BNSF filed a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon or discontinue service of 28.25 miles of railroad line between railroad milepost 343.55 in Columbus, Kansas and railroad milepost 315.30 in Carthage, Missouri.

In an order served June 21, 2002, the Board imposed several conditions, including a Section 106 historical condition, prohibiting disposition of the right-of-way. Subsequently, the Board removed the section 106 condition by decision served November 20, 2002.

Within the same order, the Board imposed a notice of interim trail use/rail banking ("NITU") and public use condition. The Board issued a deadline of December 19, 2002 on the NITU. Due to ongoing negotiations with Joplin Trails Coalition the negotiating period was extended to June 17, 2003.

The abandonment of this railroad line must be consummated on May 23, 2003 pursuant to the Board's order of May 23, 2002. However, due to imposition of the historical condition, ongoing negotiations (particularly with respect to the properties in the State of Missouri), and delays in clearing the condition barring disposition, BNSF is requesting an extension of the consummation date. BNSF requests an extension until October 31, 2003 to consummate the abandonment of this line. This extension should accommodate conclusion of a railbanking agreement and salvage of any right of way which may not be subject to railbanking.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (817) 352-2354 or [Sarah.Bailiff@BNSF.com](mailto:Sarah.Bailiff@BNSF.com)

Sincerely,

Sarah Whitley Bailiff

SWB/js

cc: Richard Batie  
Mack Wiens

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