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**Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-To-Trails Recreational District**

**"Longleaf Trace"  
P.O. Box 15187  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39404**

December 10, 2003

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K. St., NW, Room 711  
Washington, DC 20423

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Office of Proceedings

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Re: Canadian National/Illinois Central-Abandonment-Forrest County Mississippi, STB  
Docket Number AB-43 (Sub-No. 173-X)

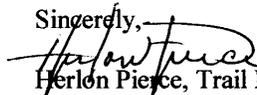
Dear Secretary Williams:

As a follow up to my conversation with Mr. Michael J. Barron Jr., Counsel for Illinois Central Railroad Company, please be advised that the Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-to-Trails Recreational District, the City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) are continuing their effort to acquire title to the above referenced abandonment. Therefore, an additional 90 day extension of time is necessary beyond the current deadline date of December 22, 2003, in order to cause the necessary coordination agreement and understandings between the referenced parties of interest in the acquisition.

As previously stated, this time is needed for the parties to reach the necessary understandings as to whom and how the title will be acquired and how the cost of acquiring the title will be distributed among the procuring entities. It is also noted that Mr. Butch Brown, executive director of MDOT, has recently resigned his duties and in view of his role as leader of the coordinated effort, this additional time is needed to reestablish leadership and the cause the acquisition effort to proceed with full agreement and to conclusion.

We sincerely regret the necessity of our making this request. However it has been and continues to be the intent of the entities involved to acquire the abandoned portion of the railroad as referenced assuming negotiations and final agreements can be reached.

Sincerely,

  
Herlon Pierce, Trail Manager

- Cc: Mr. Michael J. Barron, Jr., Counsel Illinois Central Railroad Company
- Ms. Josephine Gomillion, STB
- Mr. Wayne Brown, Southern District Commissioner MDOT
- Mr. Stone Barefield, Attorney Pearl & Leaf Rivers BOD
- Mr. Harry Lee James, Acting Executive Director, MDOT
- Mr. Johnny Dupree, Mayor, City of Hattiesburg
- Mr. Ray Balentine, Director, Planning, MDOT

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