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KARL MORELL

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July 16, 2009

E-File

Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Docket No. AB-570 (Sub-No. 3X), Palouse River & Coulee City  
Railroad, Inc. – Abandonment Exemption – In Latah County, Idaho

Dear Ms. Rutson:

On June 25, 2009, we filed with the Board the Environmental and Historic Reports in the above-captioned matter. Attached please find the e-mail we recently received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Sincerely,



Karl Morell

Enclosure

**Morell, Karl**

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**From:** Mbabaliye.Theogene@epamail.epa.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2009 2:02 PM  
**To:** Morell, Kari  
**Cc:** Reichgott.Christine@epamail.epa.gov; Somers.Elaine@epamail.epa.gov; john.cardwell@deq.idaho.gov; thomas.moore@deq.idaho.gov; rutsonv@stb.dot.gov  
**Subject:** Your proposed rail line abandonment project in Latah County, ID (STB Docket No. AB-570)

Dear Morell,

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above project materials in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Air Act §309. Under the proposal, the rail lines' abandonment activities would only involve removing rails and associated track materials and crossties within the railroad Right-Of-Way extending between Washington-Idaho State line and the intersection of A and Almon Streets in the City of Moscow, ID. There would be no regrading of the rail track, removal or disturbance of bridges, and the ballast would be left in place.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the proposed action. Our concern with the project is its potential impacts to water quality within Paradise Creek that runs through Moscow and the University of Idaho campus to Washington State downstream. Paradise Creek is on the state of Idaho most current list of impaired waters (or 303(d) list) due to the Creek's exceedances of the state water quality standards for sediment, nutrients and other criteria (see [http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data\\_reports/surface\\_water/tmdls/paradise\\_creek/paradise\\_creek.cfm](http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data_reports/surface_water/tmdls/paradise_creek/paradise_creek.cfm)). Because of that, activities near the Creek and ditches that drain into Paradise Creek could further degrade water quality within the Creek. In some locations, the stream channel is very close to the railroad tracks, roadways and paved trails.

We recommend that you work with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) to determine if a water quality certification would be required for the project and to develop any subsequent water quality restoration plan.

If you have questions about our comments, please contact me using my address below.

Theo Mbabaliye, Ph.D.  
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