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Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
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County Manager

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County Attorney

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Mission Statement
Gaston County seeks to be among the finest counties in North Carolina. It will provide effective, efficient and affordable services leading to a safe, secure and healthy community, an environment for economic growth, and promote a favorable quality of life.

GASTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

January 12, 2006

Honorable Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

JAN 23 2006

Part of
Public Record



RE: STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X), Norfolk Southern Railway Company – Abandonment Exemption – In Gaston County, N.C.

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is currently awaiting negotiations between Norfolk Southern Railway, the North Carolina Railroad Company and the City of Gastonia, regarding the future use of the above referenced rail line.

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners would like to call to your attention two issues which the Board feels are important enough to warrant the STB's consideration in expediting the abandonment of the rail line. First, and most important, is the need for immediate action by the North Carolina Department of Transportation to improve the interchange of Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 321. The interchange is simply an unsafe highway condition, and the least expensive and most expeditious way to accomplish a new interchange would be through the area now occupied by the rail line. Secondly, there is a proposed economic development project which would occupy thirty acres near the I-85/U.S. 321 interchange which requires the abandonment of the rail line.

The Commissioners understand that the current negotiations between NSR, NCRR and the City of Gastonia have been granted an extension until May 9, 2006. We urge the STB to expedite the abandonment of the referenced rail line.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Keigher, Chairman

- cc: The Honorable William Current, NC House of Representatives
- The Honorable Jennifer T. Stultz, Mayor - City of Gastonia
- The Honorable Rick Coleman, Mayor - Town of Dallas
- Gaston County Board of Commissioners (Via e-mail)
- Mr. Scott M. Saylor, President - North Carolina Railroad Company
- Mr. James R. Paschall, Senior General Attorney, Norfolk Southern Corporation
- Ms. S. B. Corey, Norfolk Southern Corporation
- Mr. Gary Spangler, NC-DOT District Engineer
- Mr. Mike Holder, NC-DOT (Via e-mail)
- Mr. Jack Kiser, City of Gastonia Planning Director (For MPO)
- Mr. Jan Winters, County Manager
- Mr. Charles L. Moore, County Attorney (Via e-mail)

Attachment: Board Action 2006-015

128 West Main Avenue, PO Box 1578, Gastonia, NC 28053-1578
Phone: 704-866-3196 - Fax 704-866-3482
E-mail: mjordan@co.gaston.nc.us

**GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD ACTION**

REQUESTED ACTION: To request the Surface Transportation Board to expedite the abandonment of rail line right-of-way in Gaston County.

COMMISSION SPONSOR: Commissioner John A. Torbett

Staff Contact: Chuck Moore, County Attorney 704.866.3194

BACKGROUND: Norfolk Southern Railway Company has petitioned the Surface Transportation Board under STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X) for an abandonment exemption for a 5 mile rail line extending between milepost HG-47.0 at Gastonia and milepost HG-52.0 at Dallas. The abandonment exemption has been extended several times to allow for continuing negotiations between Norfolk Southern, the North Carolina Railroad Company and the City of Gastonia. In order to accommodate a proposed development at the junction of I-85 and U.S. 321, and the construction of additional highway infrastructure to improve safety at the I-85/U.S. 321 interchange, the Board of Commissioners requests the Surface Transportation Board to act quickly to expedite the proposed abandonment of the rail line right of way referenced herein.

Policy Impact:

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: N/A

Is item included in current budget? Yes _____ No _____ NA _____

Recommended sources of funds:

Departmental Fiscal Review: _____

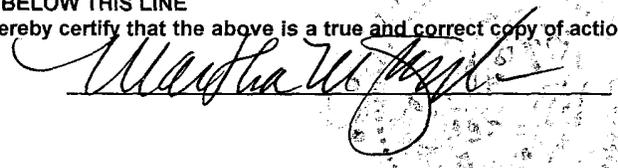
Budget Director Review: _____

Manager's Recommendation: _____

ATTACHMENTS:

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Martha M. Jordan, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:



NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CARPENTER	FLOYD	KEIGHER	BROWN	PRICE	TORBETT	FRALEY	VOTE
2006-015	1/11/2006	JT	JB		AB						U

Distribution: Representative William Current; Scott M. Saylor, NC Railroad Company President; James Paschall, Norfolk Southern Corporation Sr. General Attorney; S.B. Corey, Norfolk Southern Corporation; Mayor Rick Coleman, Dallas; Mayor Jennifer Stultz, Gastonia; Jack Kiser, Gastonia Planning Director/MPO; Gary Spangler, NCDOT; Mike Holder, NCDOT District Engineer; DocuWare Users