

OEA
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SERVICE DATE – AUGUST 19, 2025

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

SUPPLEMENTAL FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB 33 (Sub-No. 102X)

**Union Pacific Railroad Company – Discontinuance of Service Exemption –
in Bannock and Bingham Counties, Idaho**

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) has expired in this:
(X) Notice of Exemption () Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

() **NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

(X) **NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

In this docket, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) authorized Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) to abandon an approximately 21.49-mile line of railroad known as the Gay Branch, from milepost 0.03 near Fort Hall, to the end of the line at milepost 21.52, near Gay, in Bannock and Bingham Counties, Idaho (the Line). By decision served on November 6, 1996, the Board imposed a historic preservation condition pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. § 306108 (Section 106 condition).

The Section 106 condition requires UP to: (a) retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way until the section 106 process of the NHPA has been completed; (b) consult with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes prior to salvaging the right-of-way; and (c) consult with IDOT (currently known as the Idaho Transportation Department or ITD) prior to salvaging the bridge at milepost 80.77.

Comments

On June 24, 2025, OEA submitted a letter to the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) requesting concurrence with OEA's determination that the proposed abandonment, including removal of the Gay Branch Railroad bridge, would have no adverse effect on historic properties. In a letter dated August 1, 2025, the SHPO concurred with OEA's no adverse effect determination. UP is in the process of completing its documentation package in consultation with the SHPO and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and will submit the package to the SHPO and the Tribes when it is finalized.

In addition, UP submitted a letter from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes dated January 17, 2025 stating that the Tribes agree with removal of the Gay Branch Railroad bridge and associated track. By telephone on August 14, 2025, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes also confirmed that they have no issues or concerns with the no adverse effect determination for the entire rail line. Finally, in its May 5, 2025 filing, UP provided a letter from ITD stating, among other things, that it had been coordinating with UP on removal of the Gay Branch Railroad bridge.

Conclusions

For the reasons stated above, OEA recommends that the Board remove the Section 106 condition imposed in its November 6, 1996 decision.

By the Board, Danielle Gosselin, Director, Office of Environmental Analysis.