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Office of Proceedings

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Public Record

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

RE: Chicago Central & Pacific Railroad Company – Abandonment – Linn County, Iowa Docket AB-314 (Sub-No. 2X)

Dear Mr. Williams:

This comment should be treated as a protest or petition for reconsideration in the above-captioned proceeding. This comment is filed on behalf of the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa which is a government agency interested in transportation and/or natural resources, which is hereinafter referred to as 'Commenter'.

While not taking a position on the merits of this abandonment, Commenter requests issuance of a Public Use Condition as a Certificate or Notice of Interim Trail Use rather than an outright abandonment authorization between milepost ZA 225.7 and milepost ZA 229.5.

A. Public Use Condition

Commenter requests the STB to find that this property is suitable for other public use, specifically trail use, and to place the following conditions on the abandonment:

1. An order prohibiting the carrier from disposing the corridor, other than the tracks, ties and signal equipment, except of public use on reasonable terms. The justification for this condition is that the corridor would make an excellent recreational trail and conversion of the property to trail use is in accordance with local plans. In addition, the corridor provides important wildlife habitat and greenspace and its preservation as a recreational trail is consistent with that end. The time period sought is 180 days from the effective date of the abandonment authorization. Commenter needs this much time because we have not had an opportunity to assemble or to review title information or commence negotiations with the carrier.
2. An order barring removal or destruction of potential trail-related structures such as bridges, trestles, culverts and tunnels. The justification for this condition is that these structures have considerable value for recreational trail purposes. The time period requested is 180 days from the effective date of the abandonment authorization for the same reason as indicated above.

Office of Mayor Paul D. Pate

City Hall - 50 Second Avenue North - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401 - (319) 286-5051 - FAX (319) 286-5144

B. Interim Trail Use

The railroad right-of-way in this proceeding is suitable for rail banking. In addition to the public use conditions sought above, Commenter also makes the following request:

STATEMENT OF WILLINGNESS TO ASSUME FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order to establish interim trail use and rail banking under section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C §1247(d), and 49 C.F.R. §1152.29, the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa is willing to assume full responsibility for management of, for any legal liability arising out of the transfer or use of (unless the use is immune for liability, in which case it need only indemnify the railroad against any potential liability), and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against the right-of-way owned by the Chicago and Pacific Railroad Company and operated by the Chicago and Pacific Railroad Company.

The property, known as the Chicago Central and Pacific Railroad extends from railroad milepost ZA 225.7 near Blairs Ferry Road, Cedar Rapids, Iowa to railroad milepost ZA 229.5 near 4th Street, Marion, Iowa a distance of 3.8 miles in Linn County, Iowa. The right-of-way is part of a line of railroad proposed for abandonment in STB Docket No. AB-314 (Sub-No. 2X).

A map depicting the right-of-way has been mailed to you along with a copy of this letter.

The City of Cedar Rapids acknowledges that use of the right-of-way is subject to the user's continuing to meet its responsibilities described above and subject to possible future reconstruction and reactivation of the right-of-way for rail service.

By my signature below, I certify service upon Chicago Central and Pacific Railroad Company, 455 North Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611-5504, by U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, first class, this 7th day of August, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul D. Pate
Mayor
City of Cedar Rapids