

HEO-2208



**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
**Washington, DC 20423**

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

December 13, 2013

Robin Goodloe  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Georgia Ecological Services Field Office  
105 Westpark Drive  
Westpark Center, Suite D  
Athens, GA 30606-3175

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35756, Hartwell Railroad Company – Construction and Operation Exemption – In Elbert County, Georgia; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Ms. Goodloe:

I am writing to request your review and preliminary comments (explained in more detail below) on a proposed rail line construction that will soon be filed with my agency, the Surface Transportation Board (Board). The Hartwell Railroad Company intends to file a petition with the Board requesting authority to construct and operate approximately 1,400 feet of connecting track between its existing rail line and the adjacent CSX Abbeville Subdivision (see the attached Project Location Map). The purpose of this project is to provide a workable connection between the Hartwell Railroad and CSX to increase mobility and provide economic shipping competitiveness for its existing and future customers. The need for the proposed project is based on the current lack of connectivity between these two active railroads.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Board's environmental rules, the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) will prepare an environmental document that evaluates the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. **The purpose of this letter is to request information regarding potential resources within the project area that may be of concern to your agency, as well as any permits and approvals that may be required.**

This letter begins the process by which OEA will assess the potential environmental effects, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the proposed rail line construction. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether any resources of concern to your agency may be affected by the proposed project and welcome information on any additional issues or concerns that you consider appropriate. We request your response by January 17, 2014, so that we may be able to schedule any meetings, site visits, or surveys, conduct necessary follow-up activities, and incorporate your response into the scope of study, as appropriate.

Skelly and Loy, Inc. is serving as OEA's independent third-party consultant in this proceeding and will assist OEA in the preparation of the environmental document. Please send your comments to:

Mr. Kevin Starnier  
Skelly and Loy, Inc.  
449 Eisenhower Boulevard, Suite 300  
Harrisburg, PA 17111

The environmental document will be either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). OEA's decision on whether to prepare an EA or an EIS will be based, in part, on comments received in response to this agency consultation letter. OEA will make the environmental document available for review by agencies and the public as required by NEPA and the Board's environmental rules (49 C.F.R. § 1105). In reaching its decision, the Board will take into account the environmental document and all environmental comments that are received.

If you have any questions, please contact Kevin Starnier, Project Manager for Skelly and Loy, Inc. at 717-232-0593 or Diana Wood, OEA Project Manager, at 202-245-0302. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson".

Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

cc: Matthew D. Williams, Esq.

## **Federal**

Robin Goodloe  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Georgia Ecological Services Field Office  
105 Westpark Drive  
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Athens, GA 30606-3175

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4  
Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104

Rob Holland  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division  
60 Forsyth St SW, Room 10M15  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8801

James Tillman  
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Georgia State Office  
355 E Hancock Ave  
Athens, GA 30601-2775

Federal Railroad Administration, Region 3  
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Suite 16T20  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104

Gordon Wissinger  
National Park Service, Southeast Region  
100 Alabama Street, SW  
1924 Building  
Atlanta, GA 30303

## **State**

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division  
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SE  
Suite 1152 – East Tower  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Karen Anderson-Cordova  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division  
254 Washington Street, SW  
Ground Level  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Anna Yellin  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division  
Wildlife Resources Conservation Center  
2065 US Highway 278, SE  
Social Circle, GA 30025-4743

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites Division  
Panola Mountain Division Headquarters  
2600 Highway 155, SW  
Suite C  
Stockbridge, GA 30281

Georgia Department of Transportation  
One Georgia Center  
600 West Peachtree NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Georgia Department of Economic Development  
75 Fifth Street, N.W.  
Suite 1200  
Atlanta, GA 30308

Georgia Emergency Management Agency  
P.O. Box 18055  
Atlanta, Georgia 30316-0055

Robert Amos  
Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Region II  
Post Office Box 8024  
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Georgia Department of Agriculture  
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr., S.W.  
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## **Local**

Bob Thomas  
Elbert County Board of Commissioners  
P.O. Box 6109  
45 Forest Avenue  
Elberton, GA 30635

Beth Eavenson  
Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton and Bowman, Georgia  
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Elberton, GA 30635

Phyllis Brooks  
Elbert County Chamber of Commerce  
104 Heard Street  
P. O. Box 537  
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