



REGION 3

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

May 9, 2024

Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, District of Columbia 20423-001

Re: Allegheny Valley Railroad Company (AVR)
Abandonment Exemption in Allegheny County, PA - Docket No. AB 1233 (Sub-No. 2X)
Draft Environmental Assessment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) on the service date of April 8, 2024 by the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company (AVR) seeking authority to abandon an approximately 3.6-mile AVR rail line known as the "Brilliant Branch" in Pittsburgh and Aspinwall, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing NEPA, EPA has reviewed the Draft EA. We provide the attached comments previously provided to the STB on March 15, 2024 regarding the AVR's February 23, 2024 notice to the STB seeking authority to abandon the rail line and accompanying Environmental/Historic Report prepared for the proposed action.

We appreciate your consideration of these comments in developing the Final EA for the proposed action. Please reach out with any questions or to discuss further.

Sincerely,

REBECCA SOUTO-
GLYN

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SOUTO-GLYN
Date: 2024.05.09 17:37:43 -04'00'

Rebecca Souto-Glyn, NEPA Reviewer
NEPA & Technical Assistance Branch
Environmental Justice, Community Health, and
Environmental Review Division

Enclosure

cc: Thomas J. Healey, Fletcher & Sippel LLC (thealey@fletcher-sippel.com)



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PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

March 15, 2024

Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, District of Columbia 20423-001

Re: **Allegheny Valley Railroad Company (AVR)**
Abandonment Exemption in Allegheny County, PA - Docket No. AB 1233 (Sub-No. 2X)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received the notice filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) on February 23, 2024 on behalf of the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company (AVR) seeking authority to abandon an approximately 3.6-mile AVR rail line known as the “Brilliant Branch” in Pittsburgh and Aspinwall, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing NEPA, EPA has reviewed AVR’s notice to STB, as well as its accompanying Environmental/Historic Report. We provide the following comments for your consideration in developing the environmental analysis for the proposed action:

1. **Transportation System** (Environmental Report section 2) – Recommend assessing future recreational trail use in the right-of-way as a reasonably foreseeable “indirect effect” of the proposed action on regional bicycle and pedestrian transportation systems and patterns (per NEPA 102(C), 40 CFR 1502.16, and 40 CFR 1508.1(g)(2)). This analysis could identify existing regional trail networks and the potential for future recreational trail use within the right-of-way to improve system linkages and connectivity. To the extent it would be useful to inform this analysis, additional information could be provided on the trails use arrangement signed between AVR and the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC), which preserves the right-of-way for future public recreational use.
2. **Land use** (Environmental Report section 3) – Recommend identifying local and regional land use and transportation plans applicable to the proposed action.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Souto-Glyn, NEPA Reviewer
Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental
Assessment

cc: Thomas J. Healey, Fletcher & Sippel LLC (thealey@fletcher-sippel.com)