

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

SUPPLEMENTAL FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN DOCKET NO. AB 6 (Sub-No. 495X)

October 24, 2018

ABANDONMENT TYPE

() Notice of Exemption (**X**) Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

() **NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

(**X**) **NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

By decision served on August 14, 2017, the Board imposed a condition requiring BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way that are eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) from Milepost 1226.79 to Mileposts 1227.10 and 1227.58 until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 306108 (NHPA).

Comments on the EA

OEA received a cultural resource inventory report for the line segment prepared by Western Cultural, Inc. dated August 2018 from BNSF on September 26, 2018. Based on the report, OEA determined that the abandonment would not adversely affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. OEA forwarded the report with its determination to the Montana Historical Society (SHPO) on October 4, 2018. The SHPO concurred with OEA's determination of no adverse effect by letter dated October 17, 2018.

Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of the NHPA at 36 C.F.R. § 800.5(b), and following consultation with the SHPO and the public, we have determined that the proposed abandonment would not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11(e), consists of the railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and the June 23, 2017 Environmental Assessment which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public through posting on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.gov>.

Accordingly, we recommend that the Section 106 condition imposed in the Board's August 14, 2017 decision be removed.

SEA CONTACT: Ken Blodgett (202-245-0305)

KAB

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

Montana
Historical Society

October 17, 2018

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: BNSF Railway – Abandonment Exemption
Docket No. AB-6 (Sub No. 495X)
Flathead County, Montana

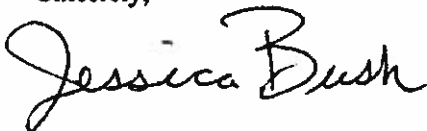
Dear Ms. Rutson:

Thank you for the letter and additional materials (received October 15, 2018) regarding the BNSF Railway – Abandonment Exemption project in Flathead County, Montana. We concur that the section of the BNSF Railroad (24FH0350) located in the project area lacks integrity and does not contribute to the overall eligibility of the railroad.

We also concur that this undertaking, as described in the provided materials, will have No Adverse Effect on Historic Properties.

If you have any additional comments or questions do not hesitate to contact me at (406) 444-0388 or JBush2@mt.gov.

Sincerely,



Jessica Bush, M.A.
Review and Compliance Officer
Montana State Historic Preservation Office

ET-26361

*Historic Preservation
Museum
Outreach & Interpretation
Publications
Research Center*

File: STB – 2017 - 2018101507

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
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Office of Environmental Analysis

Jessica Bush, M.A.
Deputy SHPO
State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
P.O. Box 201/202
1301 E. Lockey Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1201

October 4, 2018

Re: Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 495X), BNSF Railway Company – Abandonment
Exemption – Flathead County, Montana; Section 106 determination

Dear Ms. Bush:

The Surface Transportation Board issued a decision in the above-captioned case on August 14, 2017, granting BNSF abandonment authority subject to a Section 106 condition under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. § 306108. Specifically, the Section 106 condition prohibits BNSF from initiating any salvage activities on the rail line at issue (including removal of tracks and ties) and requires BNSF to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures, and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) that are eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The condition also prevents BNSF from filing a consummation notice with the Board for the abandonment of the line until the Section 106 process is completed and the Board removes the condition.

The Board imposed this condition on a portion of the BNSF rail line from Milepost 1226.79 to two end points at Mileposts 1227.10 and 1227.58. The remaining portion of the rail line is part of the Kalispell Core Area Development and Trail Project, which includes plans to convert a section of the BNSF rail line in Kalispell into a community park and trail.

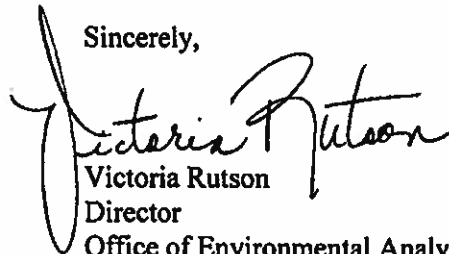
The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) received a cultural resource inventory report prepared by Western Cultural, Inc. (Western Cultural), dated August 2018 (copy attached). The report addresses the requirements of the Section 106 condition imposed by the Board and has allowed OEA to reach the conclusions discussed below.

One previously recorded site (24FH0350) is located on the segment and has been determined as National Register eligible under Criteria A for its association with significant events that contributed to the broad patterns of local, state and regional history. Western

Cultural' s report also indicates that the site may be eligible under Criteria B for its known association with James J. Hill, an early American railroad magnate. The segment surveyed for this inventory is not associated with any unique grade segments, bridges, or tunnels. Repair work and replacement of rails and ties has also taken place over time. The segment has been stranded from the rail network and adjacent tracks removed. OEA has determined that the segment has suffered a loss of integrity over time and no longer qualifies as eligible under Criteria A. The segment is not recommended as eligible under Criteria B and C.

Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of NHPA, we have also determined that the proposed abandonment would not adversely affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. We look forward to your concurrence with our determinations. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Kenneth Blodgett of my staff at (202) 245-0305.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosure