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SERVICE DATE – FEBRUARY 12, 2026

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 511 (Sub-No. 8X)

CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY OF INDIANAPOLIS—
ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—IN HOWARD COUNTY, IND.

Decided: February 12, 2026

Central Railroad Company of Indianapolis (CERA) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon two rail lines extending approximately 1.77 miles in the City of Kokomo, Howard County, Ind., consisting of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 54.3 to milepost 55.6, and a segment of the Marion Subdivision from milepost 180.87 to milepost 181.26. Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on January 23, 2026 (91 Fed. Reg. 2987). The notice indicated that the exemption would become effective on February 22, 2026, unless stayed by the Board or unless a formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) was filed by February 2, 2026. The notice also indicated that interim trail use/railbanking requests would be due by February 2, 2026, and petitions to reopen and requests for public use conditions would be due by February 12, 2026. The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) issued a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) on January 30, 2026, and requested comments by February 16, 2026.

The City of Kokomo, Ind. (the City), filed a request for a public use condition and for interim trail use/railbanking for both the Tipton Industrial Lead and Marion Subdivision segments on January 28, 2026.¹

By order served on February 2, 2026, due to a lapse in the Board's appropriation and resulting cessation of operations, the effective date of the abandonment exemption was stayed, and any relevant filing or Board deadlines on or after February 2, 2026, were postponed until further order of the Board. The Board resumed operations on February 4, 2026.

On February 4, 2026, CERA filed a letter stating that it consents to negotiate trail use on the Tipton Industrial Lead segment but does not address the request for trail use on the Marion Subdivision segment. (CERA Letter 1.) CERA further states that it does not take a position on the City's request for a public use condition. (*Id.* at 1 n.1.) In its letter, CERA also notes that, in its verified notice of exemption, it erroneously described one of the endpoints for the Tipton Industrial Lead as being at milepost 55.6, but now states that the milepost should be

¹ The City's requests will be addressed in a subsequent decision.

milepost 55.66, a discrepancy of 0.06 miles (or 317 feet). (*Id.*) According to CERA, the map it submitted with its verified notice contained the correct milepost. (*Id.* at 2.)

CERA requests that the Board “grant[] the abandonment” and allow the parties to negotiate trail use to milepost 55.66. (*Id.*) CERA asserts that the difference in milepost numbers is de minimis and that, because this segment is out of service, no shippers are impacted by this error. (*Id.*) CERA also states this segment abuts another rail line that is currently under a trail use agreement starting at milepost 55.66. (*Id.*); see also CERA/City Letter 1, Oct. 20, 2014, Cent. R.R. Co. of Indianapolis—Aban. Exemption—in Howard Cnty., Ind., AB 511 (Sub-No. 6X) (informing the Board that a trail use agreement was reached). As such, CERA notes that if it receives abandonment authority only to milepost 55.6, the remaining 317 feet would remain an active rail line. (CERA Letter 2.) CERA asserts that the Board has adjusted for milepost errors “after-the-fact,” citing Kiski Junction R.R.—Acquis. Exemption—Berkman Rail Servs., FD 34681 (STB served May 24, 2021).

CERA seeks to add 0.06 miles of rail line to its verified notice of exemption. Although this is a small addition, the Board’s regulations require certain certification, public notice, and public outreach in abandonment proceedings, and CERA has not satisfied those requirements with respect to the additional segment. Notably, in this case, CERA’s request to adjust the milepost was filed after the Draft EA seeking comment on the impacts of the proposed abandonment was served. See Norfolk S. Ry.—Aban. Exemption—in Baltimore Cnty., Md., Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 237X) (permitting carrier to correct milepost, adding additional mile to the subject line, before Draft EA seeking comment on extended line was served).

Under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(b), a carrier in an exempt abandonment proceeding must make certain certifications regarding service on the line sought to be abandoned. Additionally, there are several notice requirements a carrier must complete prior to filing for abandonment authority with the Board. First, a carrier must consult with certain federal, state, and local agencies regarding environmental and historic impacts from the proposed abandonment and give those consulting agencies an opportunity to provide input. 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(b), 1105.8(c). Second, it must serve notice of the proposed abandonment on several federal and state agencies listed in 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(d). Third, the carrier must certify that it has published in a newspaper of general circulation in each county through which the line passes a notice that alerts the public to the proposed abandonment, to available reuse alternatives, and to how it may participate in the Board proceeding. 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(c), 1105.12. Here, CERA has not made the required certification under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(b) with respect to the additional 0.06 miles of line. Additionally, CERA’s letters to the required federal, state, and local agencies and its newspaper notice described the Tipton Industrial Lead Subdivision as extending to milepost 55.6, not milepost 55.66. (CERA Env’t/Hist. Rep., Ex. B; CERA Notice, Ex. B & C). CERA must comply with the Board’s requirements with respect to the segment of line between milepost 55.6 and 55.66 before the Board can grant it authority to abandon the additional 0.06 miles of rail line.²

² CERA’s citation to Kiski Junction is inapposite. That proceeding involved a rail line acquisition and thus was not subject to the Board’s environmental review process. Although the

CERA therefore will be directed to take the following remedial actions. First, it must certify that the information contained in its verified notice of exemption—including with regard to § 1152.50(b)—is applicable to the Tipton Industrial Lead segment between mileposts 55.6 and 55.66. Second, it must republish notice in a newspaper of general circulation.³ Third, CERA must notify the consulting agencies listed in 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(b) and 1105.8(c), no later than February 17, 2026, that CERA now seeks to abandon an additional portion of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 55.6 to 55.66. Given the de minimis amount of rail line at issue, CERA will not be required to file a revised Environmental and Historic Report. Instead, CERA must inform the consulting agencies by letter, explaining that the consulting agencies and the public may submit comments to OEA with respect to abandonment of the additional 0.06 miles of rail line during the Draft EA comment period, which will now close March 9, 2026. The letter must include information on how the consulting parties and the public may submit comments. Lastly, CERA must provide the required notice set forth in 49 C.F.R. §1152.50(d) to the federal and state agencies listed in that section.

Once CERA has completed these remedial actions, it must submit to the Board: (1) certification that it has complied with the newspaper publication requirement, as required by 49 C.F.R. § 1105.12; (2) a certificate of service for the consulting agencies listed in 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(b) and 1105.8(c); and (3) a certificate of service for the federal and state agencies listed in 49 C.F.R. §§ 1152.50(d). Upon receipt of these certificates, the Board will republish notice of the abandonment with the corrected milepost in the Federal Register.

In light of this action, the effective date of the exemption will remain stayed, and any further relevant filing or Board deadlines (except the Draft EA comment deadline) will remain postponed. Should CERA submit the required certifications, the effective date and any further relevant filing or Board deadlines will be set forth in the republished Federal Register notice. As noted, the period for comments in response to the Draft EA (which was scheduled to end February 16, 2026) will now close on March 9, 2026.

Board has corrected mileposts in abandonment proceedings after publication of notice in the Federal Register, those cases have usually involved circumstances in which the amount of rail line was being reduced, see N.Y. & Greenwood Lake Railway—Abandonment Exemption—in Passaic, Passaic County, N.J., AB 1006, slip op. at 1 (STB served May 17, 2007), or the milepost was wrong but the geographic location of the endpoint of the line was still correct, see St. Croix Valley Railroad—Abandonment & Discontinuance of Service Exemption—in Pine & Kanabec Counties., Minn., AB 850X, slip op. at 1 (STB served Mar. 30, 2007). Neither is the case here.

³ Given the departure from the Board's usual procedures (as explained in this decision), CERA will need to modify the language of the sample newspaper publication notice in 49 C.F.R. § 1105.12 to comport with the circumstances of this proceeding (if it chooses to rely on that sample). CERA's newspaper notice should still alert the public generally to the proposed abandonment, to available reuse alternatives, such as trail use and public use, and to how it may participate in a Board proceeding.

It is ordered:

1. CERA is directed to certify that the information contained in its verified notice of exemption is applicable to the segment of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 55.6 to milepost 55.66.

2. CERA is directed to comply with the newspaper publication requirement of 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(c) and 1105.12 for the portion of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 55.6 to milepost 55.66, and certify to the Board that it has done so.

3. CERA is directed to serve a letter to the consulting agencies listed in 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(b) and 1105.8(c), by February 17, 2026, informing them that (a) CERA now seeks to abandon an additional portion of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 55.6 to 55.66, and (b) informing the consulting agencies that they may submit comments to OEA by March 9, 2026, and provide information on how they and the public may do so. CERA shall file a certificate of service indicating that it has complied with this requirement.

4. CERA is directed to comply with the notice requirement of 49 C.F.R. §1152.50(d) for the portion of the Tipton Industrial Lead from milepost 55.6 to milepost 55.66. CERA shall file a certificate of service indicating that it has complied with this requirement.

5. The due date for comments in response to the Draft EA is now March 9, 2026.

6. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.