



Department of Transportation

State of Georgia

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Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1002

HAROLD E. LINNENKOHL
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TREASURER
(404) 656-5224

October 1, 2007

Mr. Karl Morell
c/o Ball Janik, LLP
1455 F. Street, NW
Suite 225
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Number AB-1000 (Sub No. 1X) Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., Notification of Abandonment in Harris and Meriwether Counties, Georgia (between Florida Rock and Allie)

Dear Mr. Morell:

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) wishes to file a formal Protest supporting the opposition to the above referenced abandonment of the railroad from milepost R-12.0, at Florida Rock, Georgia, to milepost R-55.0, at Allie, Georgia. The application for abandonment (exemption) was filed on September 11, 2007, by the Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., and this protest is being filed with the STB within the 20 day requirement. Included are the protest filing and the requested ten (10) copies of the protest document with the required Certificate of Service.

We appreciate your concern in this matter. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 404-651-9201.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey D. Keepler".

Harvey D. Keepler, Administrator
Office of Intermodal Programs

HDK/SY

cc: Terry Small

Enclosure



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October 1, 2007

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Number AB-1000 (Sub No. 1X) Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., Notification of Abandonment in Harris and Meriwether Counties, Georgia (between Florida Rock and Allie)

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) wishes to file a formal Protest supporting the opposition to the above referenced abandonment of the railroad from milepost R-12.0, at Florida Rock, Georgia, to milepost R-55.0, at Allie, Georgia. The application for abandonment (exemption) was filed on September 11, 2007, by the Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., and this protest is being filed with the STB within the 20 day requirement. Included are the protest filing and the requested ten (10) copies of the protest document with the required Certificate of Service.

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Harvey D. Keepler, Administrator
Office of Intermodal Programs

HDK/SY

cc: Karl Morell
Terry Small

Enclosure



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October 1, 2007

Mr. Terry Small
Georgia Southwestern Railroad
78 Pulpwood Road
Dawson, GA 39842

Re: Number AB-1000 (Sub No. 1X) Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., Notification of Abandonment in Harris and Meriwether Counties, Georgia (between Florida Rock and Allie)

Dear Mr. Small:

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) wishes to file a formal Protest supporting the opposition to the above referenced abandonment of the railroad from milepost R-12.0, at Florida Rock, Georgia, to milepost R-55.0, at Allie, Georgia. The application for abandonment (exemption) was filed on September 11, 2007, by the Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc., and this protest is being filed with the STB within the 20 day requirement. Included are the protest filing and the requested ten (10) copies of the protest document with the required Certificate of Service.

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Harvey D. Keepler, Administrator
Office of Intermodal Programs

HDK/SY

cc: Karl Morell

Enclosure

Before The

Surface Transportation Board

STB NO. AB-1000 (Sub-No. 1X)

Georgia Southwestern Railroad
Petition for Abandonment (Exemption)
In Harris and Meriwether Counties, GA
(Between Florida Rock, GA and Allie, GA)

Verified Statement of:

Harvey D. Keepler – Administrator

Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Intermodal Programs

276 Memorial Drive, S.W.

Atlanta, GA 30303

Verified Statement of:

Harvey D. Keepler

Verified Statement of:

Harvey D. Keepler

Georgia Department of Transportation

Docket No. AB-1000 (Sub-NO 1X)

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is the designated agency in Georgia that ultimately oversees Rail Planning statewide. As the designated agency, the Department has conducted a review on the possible impacts this railroad will have on this area of Georgia. The conclusions we have concluded are not good for the communities involved. This rail line, if abandoned, will depress the region it serves even further than it is today. The area this railroad serves remains dependant on the manufacturing and agricultural sectors and the economy of the area, in general, has not been robust; especially Meriwether County. The potential these two counties possess will be jeopardized by the absence of this rail line.

First of all, the railroad, Georgia Southwestern Railroad, has owned the railroad property for less than two years and, subsequently, has had less than two years to market rail service to existing industries along the line and to potential industries seeking to locate and receive rail service on the line. We believe this short period of ownership and service to not be enough time to thoroughly market rail service and rail alternatives to existing industries on and near the line, nor do we believe it to be time enough to attract new industries and businesses to the area. Especially since there are numerous sites along the 43-mile length of the line that are ripe for industrial development.

Secondly, the decision for an industry to change from, for example, truck service to rail service is not one taken lightly by the industry. Prior to making such a change, an industry would usually conduct a thorough analysis in which the outcome, or bottom line, would have to indicate a significant savings could be achieved. Once such a bottom line analysis has been made, it then becomes a decision based on other factors, such as the industry and railroad's ability to efficiently and effective arrange access (i.e. via a rail siding/spur) and/or the railroad's ability to consistently serve the industry in a suitable fashion. Again, less than two years of rail service on any rail line is not enough time for a railroad to demonstrate such ability.

Thirdly, by its own admission, Georgia Southwestern Railroad's proposed abandonment of this rail line will result in, at a minimum of, seven (7) rail carloads per mile per year of rail traffic, or 300 rail car loads per year, be diverted to another railroad or off the railroad and onto the area's highways and byways by its present customer, Georgia Pacific, in Durand. If off the railroad and onto the highways, these carloads equate to a range of 1,350 – 1,500 trucks per year being added onto the roadways in Meriwether and Harris Counties. Taking freight traffic off the railroad (traffic that is well suited for rail shipment due to the nature of the products being shipped; i.e. timber, plywood and veneer) and placing it on to city, county and state roads is not consistent with the Department's efforts to better manage and/or reduce traffic and congestion on the state's transportation infrastructure.

In the above example, traffic that is currently being handled by Georgia Southwestern Railroad may be shifted to CSX Inc, a Class I rail provider who also serves the industry. If shifted, the proposed increase in truck traffic will not occur. However, without the existence of Georgia Southwestern Railroad, a Class III rail provider, competitive rail shipping rates will not exist in the market place. In all likelihood, the business Georgia Southwestern Railroad obtained from this industry is because they could serve the industry in a manner that is/was competitive; otherwise, the industry would have conducted business with the Class I provider.

Additionally, the abandonment of this line, as proposed, will result in the loss of 43-mile rail transportation corridor in an area of the state that could least afford to lose such a facility. Meriwether County is designated as a "Tier 1" County by the Department of Economic Development. This designation by the Department of Economic Development (Tier 1 – Tier 4) is largely determined by per capita income, and poverty and unemployment rates, with Tier 1 being the poorest/highest poverty and unemployment rate, respectively. A County such as Meriwether County that has a Tier 1 designation can ill afford to lose an existing and active rail transportation option such as this rail line provides, especially when compared to its neighboring Harris County that currently has a Tier 4 designation.

In conclusion, the end result of losing this track segment to rail freight service would hamper any public efforts to preserve and restore other feeder rail line networks in Georgia (this line is considered a feeder line because it ends at a point north of Greenville, GA, and does not tie to a Class I Railroad at this location). One of the Department's active rail programs is to acquire and rehabilitate railroads to better preserve the state's entire rail network. Since 1992, the Department has acquired 540 miles of railroads property and since 1981; the Department has actively been involved in rehabilitating railroad property (nearly 800 miles). In most instances, this railroads

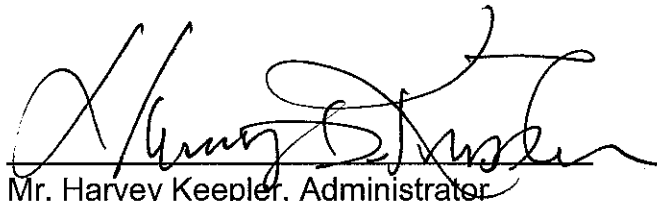
would have been abandoned and the impact detrimental to the local economy. This part of Georgia, especially Meriwether County, is already suffering from some of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that on October 1, 2007, I served the foregoing document: Petition for Protest against Abandonment – In Harris and Meriwether Counties (Between Florida Rock and Allie). Docket NO. AB-1000 (Sub-No. 1X), by fax and by overnight mail to the following:

Mr. Terry Small
Georgia Southwestern Railroad
78 Pulpwood Road
Dawson, GA 39842

Mr. Karl Morell
Ball Janik, LLP
1455 F Street, N.W. Suite 225
Washington, D.C. 20005

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Mr. Harvey Keepler, Administrator
Office of Intermodal Programs
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