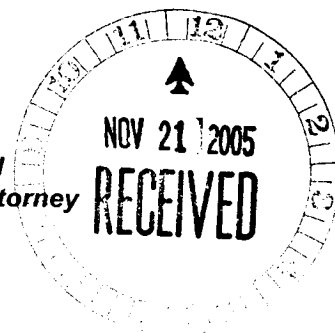




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November 15, 2005

Honorable Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

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215772

Re: STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X), Norfolk Southern Railway
Company - Abandonment Exemption - In Gaston County, NC -
Request for Extension of Consummation Date Deadline

Dear Mr. Williams:

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) hereby requests that the Board grant NSR a 6-month extension of the deadline date, from December 9, 2005 to May 9, 2006, to consummate abandonment of the rail line that was the subject of NSR's petition for exemption in this docket. The Board's decision served December 9, 2003 granted NSR an exemption to abandon its railroad line between Milepost HG-47.0 at Gastonia, NC and Milepost HG-52.0 at Dallas (Gebo), NC in Gaston County, NC. In decisions served December 1, 2004 and April 7, 2005, the Board granted NSR extensions of the deadline date for consummation of the abandonment totaling 12 months. NSR and other interested parties have made progress on a plan for disposition of the line, but the additional time period has proved insufficient for them to reach a final agreement. Moreover, NSR has recently undertaken some trenching and road closure work in anticipation of reaching an agreement. The interested parties desire that this work be completed before any final agreements with respect to the disposition of the line are reached.

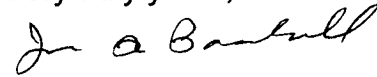
NSR has been discussing the possibility of conveying the line to the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR) as a line of railroad or for railbanking in some form. The parties also have been discussing the disposition of the line with the City of Gastonia, which previously had filed a request for an interim trail use negotiation condition. NSR previously stated that consideration would be given to negotiation for interim trail use of the right-of-way if an agreement inconsistent with such use were not reached with the NCRR. While NSR and NCRR have had ongoing discussions about

Mr. Vernon A. Williams
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November 15, 2005
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this matter, more recent discussions also have included the City of Gastonia. Evaluation of the facts, circumstances and options concerning the disposition and future use of the right-of-way have taken longer than originally anticipated and now have been delayed by NSR's maintenance work on the property. We believe, however, that satisfactory progress has been made and an agreement can be reached within the next several months. We believe that further consideration and negotiation concerning the future of the line while NSR retains options with respect to it because the abandonment has not been consummated should result in a more favorable disposition for local interests than straight abandonment of the line and treatment of the property as ordinary real estate. It will take the parties additional time to reach that result. Even though no trail use negotiation period has been imposed in this case, the extension will keep the option of disposition under the Trails Act open and will be for the same length of time that the Board commonly grants for extensions trail use negotiation periods.

We have no reason to believe the requested extension of the deadline date would result in any adverse effect on any party. In fact, the additional time will help facilitate negotiations that might lead to preservation of the right-of-way as a line of railroad or an interim trail. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



James R. Paschall

cc: via fax (704) 854-6607
Honorable Jennifer T. Stultz, Mayor
City of Gastonia
P. O. Box 1748
Gastonia, NC 28053-1748

cc via e-mail:
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Mr. D. M. Mazur
Mr. M. C. Kirchner
Mr. R. L. Williams

Ms. J. M. Lipps
Mr. R. P. Dietz
Mr. W. L. Barringer
Mr. G. A. Meade