

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN DOCKET NO. AB-43 (Sub-No. 186X)

September 25, 2013

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) has expired in this:

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

() **NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

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The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proceeding on September 9, 2013 for public review and comment. In the EA, OEA recommended one environmental condition and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Comments on the EA

OEA has received comments from the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) stating that no geodetic station markers are located in the project area. Accordingly, the proposed abandonment would not affect any geodetic station markers.

OEA has received comments from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP). In its comments, MDWFP identifies three state listed species of concern that may occur within two miles of the proposed abandonment. The three species identified by MDWFP are the tapered pondorn (*Uniomerus declivis*), the Alabama shad (*Alosa alabamae*), and the rock pocketbook (*Arcidens confragosus*). MDWFP states that, if best management practices are properly implemented, monitored, and maintained, the proposed abandonment would likely pose no threat to these species of concern or their habitat.

Modifications to the EA

In the EA, OEA recommended one condition that would require Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) to consult with NGS regarding the potential impact of the proposed abandonment on any geodetic station markers present in the project area. Because NGS has submitted comments stating that no geodetic station markers are present in the project area, OEA is no longer recommending the condition requiring IC to consult with NGS.

In order to address the concerns of MDWFP regarding potential impacts to state listed species of concern, OEA recommends that a new condition be imposed requiring IC to consult with MDWFP regarding the implementation of appropriate and effective best management practices prior to beginning salvage activities.

Conclusions

The EA comment period has ended. OEA recommends (1) that the previously recommended condition requiring IC to consult with NGS not be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority in this proceeding, and (2) that a new condition be imposed requiring IC to consult with MDWFP regarding the implementation of best management practices. The recommended condition is as follows:

- 1. Prior to commencement of any salvage activities, Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) shall consult with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks regarding the implementation of appropriate and effective best management practices and shall comply with that agency's reasonable recommendations.**

If the above condition is imposed, OEA believes that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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