

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-303 (Sub-No. 18X)

WISCONSIN CENTRAL LTD. — ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION —
IN POLK COUNTY, WI

Decided: February 10, 2004

By decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) served on March 13, 1998, a 180-day period was authorized for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with Wisconsin Central Ltd. (WCL) for a 15.25-mile line of railroad known as the Dresser-Amery Line, between milepost 47.83 in Dresser and milepost 63.08 in Amery, Polk County, WI. The negotiating period was extended through February 10, 2004, by decisions served on October 2, 1998, March 5, 1999, August 30, 1999, March 1, 2000, August 28, 2000, February 22, 2001, August 29, 2001, February 19, 2002, August 19, 2002, February 14, 2003, and August 13, 2003.

On February 9, 2004, WisDNR¹ and WCL jointly filed a petition for an extension of the negotiating period for 180 days. Petitioners state that WCL did sell the portion of the line between milepost 49.6 and milepost 63.08 (presumably for use as a trail), but that the parties are still negotiating on the portion between milepost 47.83 and milepost 49.6 and more time is needed to finalize negotiations.

Where, as here, the carrier is willing to continue trail use negotiations, the negotiating period may be extended.² Petitioners have shown that the additional time is necessary to complete negotiations. An extension of time will promote the establishment of trails and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d). Accordingly, the NITU negotiating period will be extended for that portion of the line between milepost 47.83 and milepost 49.6 for a period of 180 days from February 10, 2004.

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

¹ The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is filing on behalf of WisDNR.

² See Rail Abandonments — Supplemental Trails Act Procedures, 4 I.C.C.2d 152, 157-58 (1987).

It is ordered:

1. Petitioners' request to extend the NITU negotiating period is granted.
2. The NITU negotiating period is extended for that portion of the line between milepost 47.83 and milepost 49.6 until August 8, 2004.
3. This decision is effective on the date of service.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary