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OEA

SERVICE DATE – MARCH 19, 2020

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB 1294X

**Eighteen Thirty Group, LLC – Abandonment Exemption –
in Allegany County, Md.**

Docket No. AB 1293X

**Georges Creek Railway – Discontinuance Exemption –
in Allegany County, Md.**

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) has expired in this:
(X) Notice of Exemption () Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

() NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

(X) NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

OEA served a Draft EA for this proceeding on February 28, 2020 for public review and comment. In the Draft EA, OEA did not recommend any environmental conditions and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Comments on the Draft EA

OEA received one comment after the issuance of the Draft EA. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) submitted a comment, dated March 3, 2020, acknowledging the State Clearinghouse's receipt of the Draft EA for intergovernmental review. MDP stated that it forwarded the Draft EA to the Maryland Department(s) of the Environment, Transportation, Natural Resources; Allegany County; and the Maryland Historical Trust.

Modifications to the Draft EA

Upon further independent review, OEA would like to correct a statement in the Draft EA. The Draft EA stated that no comments were received from the Planning Commission of Allegany County & Growth (PCAC&G). However, OEA did receive one comment letter dated February 3, 2020 from PCAC&G in support of railbanking. In its letter, PCAC&G noted that the Allegany County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies the George's Creek Rail Trail as

a desirable project that would redevelop the existing rail right-of-way into a continuous pedestrian and bicycle trail linking the various towns in the valley as well as connecting the valley to other regional trail networks. PCAC&G stated that railbanking would allow the opportunity for the right-of-way to be used to benefit the community in other ways until such time that use as a rail line may be beneficial again. OEA is not recommending any new conditions as a result of this comment.

Conclusions

The Draft EA comment period has ended, and no conditions are recommended by OEA. Accordingly, OEA believes that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Director, Office of Environmental Analysis.