



GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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225/23

May 11, 2009

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Honorable Anne K. Quinlan
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE:

Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 316X) Norfolk Southern Railway Company – Discontinuance of Service Exemption – Mecklenburg County, VA and Granville County, NC (Clarksville, VA to at Oxford & Henderson Railroad Junction near Oxford, NC)

225/23

Docket No. AB-866 (Sub-No.2X), North Carolina & Virginia Railroad Co., Inc., Virginia Southern Railroad Division – Mecklenburg County, VA and Granville County, NC (Clarksville, VA to at Oxford and Henderson Railroad Junction near Oxford, NC)

225/24

Dear Acting Secretary Quinlan:

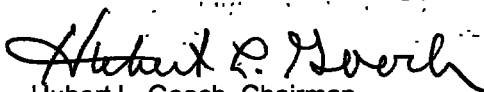
Please accept this as notice of Comment. Granville County takes no position on the discontinuance of rail service between Oxford, the county seat, and Clarksville, VA. There has been no rail service on the line for at least 15 years. In places, the tracks are not visible for the trees growing up between the railroad ties and the heavy foliage. Some adjacent property owners have mowed and maintained the right of way that crosses their property. In the Town of Stovall and the Bullock community, the tracks and rail bed has been incorporated as a community landscape feature, with benches and picnic tables.

This notice of Comment regards Granville County's adopted Greenway Master Plan 2006, which identifies the 15.25 mile trail corridor between Oxford-Clarkesville as part of a two state regional rail trail linking Virginia's Tobacco Heritage Trail in Mecklenburg County, VA, and the American Tobacco Trail in Durham County, NC. Under CFR 1152 Subpart F Exempt Abandonments only Norfolk Southern Railroad can request the Surface Transportation Board to assign a "Notice of Interim Trail Use Certificate" to the corridor. It is Granville County's intent to initiate a dialogue with Norfolk Southern regarding such a request to accomplish the Granville County Greenway Master Plan's goal of a trail of regional significance.

The 1992 Penn State Study on Impact of Rail-Trails, concludes that a 10 miles rail trail can generate ½ million dollars of recreational and tourism spending annually. A rail trail is an alternative active transportation corridor for walking, bicycling and horse back riding. If federally rail banked, the corridor will have both economic and environmental benefits for Granville County and the region.

Thank you for receiving this comment.

Sincerely,


Hubert L. Gooch, Chairman
Granville County Board of Commissioners

pc:

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