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SERVICE DATE – JULY 6, 2012

DO

FR-4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Docket No. AB 32 (Sub-No. 105X)]

Boston and Maine Corporation—Abandonment Exemption—in Worcester County, Mass.

Boston and Maine Corporation (B&M) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. pt. 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon a 0.14 mile freight rail operating easement for a line of railroad known as the Heywood Branch, between mileposts 27.29 and 27.43, in Gardner, Worcester County, Mass.¹ The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 01440.

B&M has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 C.F.R. § 1105.7(c) (environmental report), 49 C.F.R. § 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 C.F.R.

¹ On June 20, 2012, the Board received a clarification indicating that B&M does not own the subject line, but holds a freight rail operating easement over the line. B&M explains that it sold the right-of-way to New England Power Company in 1963 subject to B&M's retaining an easement to continue to perform the freight rail operations over the line.

§ 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. § 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on August 7, 2012, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.27(c)(2),³ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29 must be filed by July 16, 2012. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.28 must be filed by July 26, 2012, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Serv. Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C. 2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

³ Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,500. See 49 C.F.R. § 1002.2(f)(25).

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to B&M's representative: Robert B. Burns, Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, MA 01862.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

B&M has filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. OEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by July 13, 2012. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to OEA (Room 1100, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29(e)(2), B&M shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by B&M's filing of a notice of consummation by July 6, 2013, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at
“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: July 2, 2012.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.