

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

#ED-1838
DHW

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN
DOCKET NO. AB 979 (Sub-No. 2X)

February 3, 2012

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**

(X) **NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

In this proceeding, the Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc. (CSO) filed a notice of exemption with the Board seeking approval authority to abandon approximately 2.4 miles of rail line located in the town of Suffield, Hartford County, Connecticut. The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proceeding on January 13, 2012 for public review and comment. In the EA, OEA recommended 2 environmental conditions (1 historic) and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

OEA received correspondence from 2 different agencies during the 15-day comment period. The comments are summarized below. In this Final EA, OEA is removing 1 of the 2 environmental (historic) conditions previously recommended for imposition in the EA and adding a new consultation condition that would require CSO to consult with the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Geodetic Service (NGS) prior to initiating salvage operations.

Comments on the EA

CSO submitted an historic report as required by the Board's environmental rules [49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(a)] and served the report on the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c). By letter dated January 11, 2012, the SHPO commented that 2 bridges (Bridge #1 and Bridge #2) on the line proposed for abandonment are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The SHPO has concluded that the proposed abandonment – which would retain the 2 bridges, roadbed and ballast – would have no adverse effect on National Register listed or eligible properties affected by this undertaking.¹ The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11 (d),

¹ The SHPO believes that the 2 bridges would be best preserved if the line were used for some other public use, such as a trail or park, and recommends that these options be explored. However, to date, no Trail or Public Use requests have been filed with the Board and OEA believes that the Board-imposed deadline for submitting such requests has already passed. See January 9, 2012 notice at www.stb.dot.gov, select "E-Library," then "Decisions," and search for AB 979 (Sub-No. 2X).

consists of the railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and the EA, which have been made available to the public through the Board's website. OEA therefore recommends that the Section 106 condition previously recommended in the EA be removed at this time.

By email dated January 19, 2012, NGS commented that there is 1 geodetic marker in the area of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, OEA is recommending a condition that requires CSO to notify NGS at least 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities that will disturb or destroy this geodetic station marker.

Conclusions

The EA comment period has ended. Accordingly, OEA is recommending that the following 2 conditions be imposed upon any decision granting abandonment authority.

1. Prior to commencement of any salvage activities, the Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc. (CSO) shall consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regarding potential impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands, and shall comply with the reasonable requirements of the Corps.
2. CSO shall consult with the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Geodetic Survey (NGS) and notify NGS at least 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities that will disturb or destroy any geodetic station markers.

OEA concludes that if the above conditions are imposed, the proposed action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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Distribution: Andrea Pope-Matheson, Office of Proceedings
 Barbara Saddler, Office of Proceedings
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OEA Chron ECT

Attachments



**State Historic
Preservation Office**



January 11, 2012

Ms. Melanie B. Yasbin
Law Offices of Louis E. Gitomer, LLC.
600 Baltimore Avenue
Suite 301
Towson, Maryland 21204

Subject: Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.
Abandonment of rail line
Suffield, CT
Docket No. AB-979 (Sub-No. 2X)

Dear Ms. Yasbin:

The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the information submitted for the abandonment of 2.4 miles of railroad line between milepost 2.0 and 4.4 on the Suffield Subdivision line in Hartford County.

It is the opinion of this office that Bridge #1 (41 57' 19N) and Bridge #2 (41 58' 27N) are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Based on the information provided, we expect that the proposed abandonment will have no adverse effect upon the state's cultural resources; however in order to preserve the historic bridges an alternative use for the line should be explored, for example a walking trail or park.

This office appreciates the opportunity to have reviewed and commented on this undertaking.

For further information please contact Laura L. Mancuso, Environmental Review Coordinator, at (860) 256-2757 or laura.mancuso@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

David Bahlman
State Historic Preservation Officer

E1-18738
D4W
AB 979 2X

Re: NGS Response, STB Docket AB-979 (SUB NO. 02X) 

Vicki Rutson to: Diana Wood

Sent by: Kenneth Blodgett

01/23/2012 02:17 PM

Simon Monroe

01/19/2012 04:29:31 PM



Simon Monroe
<simon.monroe@noaa.gov>

01/19/2012 04:29 PM

To melanie@lgrailaw.com

cc Surface Transportation Board <sea@stb.dot.gov>,
Surveyorlady@yahoo.com, Gilbert Mitchell
<Gilbert.Mitchell@noaa.gov>, Simon Monroe
<Simon.Monroe@noaa.gov>

Subject NGS Response, STB Docket AB-979 (SUB NO. 02X)

> Thank you for sharing your railroad abandonment environmental
report for
>
> SUFFIELD, Hartford County, CONNECTICUT.
>
>
>
> Approximately 01 geodetic survey marks may be located in the
area
> described.
> If marks will be disturbed by the abandonment, [THE RAILROAD]
shall
> consult with the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) at least 90
days prior to
> beginning salvage activities that will disturb, or destroy any
> geodetic station
>
> marks described on the attached file. Additional advice is
provided at
> <http://geodesy.noaa.gov/marks/railroads/>
>

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