

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

POST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN STB DOCKET NO. AB-290 (Sub-No. 310X)

May 29, 2009

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) has expired in this:

(X) Notice of Exemption () Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

(X) NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

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SEA served an EA for this proceeding on May 8, 2009 for public review and comment. In the EA, SEA recommended two environmental conditions and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Comments on the EA

Not applicable.

Modifications to the EA

Not applicable.

Conclusions

The EA comment period has ended. Accordingly, SEA recommends that the following conditions previously recommended in the EA should be imposed upon any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. Norfolk Southern Railway Company shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) and notify NGS at least 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities that could disturb or destroy any geodetic station markers.

2. Prior to commencement of any salvage activities, Norfolk Southern Railway Company shall consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mobile District (USACOE) regarding potential impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands, and shall comply with the reasonable requirements of any USACOE permit.

If the above conditions are imposed, SEA believes that the proposed action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

NOTE: Norfolk Southern Railway Company's (NSR) intent to remove nineteen bridges on the line proposed for abandonment was not stated in NSR's environmental report. It was not until SEA received a copy of an April 28, 2009 letter from NSR to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources that NSR specified and SEA became aware of NSR's bridge removal plans. SEA noted those plans in the EA. Although it does not appear that the proposed abandonment would result in the placement of fill in waters of the U.S. including wetlands (fill activities require a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344)), bridge removal, however, increases the potential need for fill activities. Therefore, SEA recommended the condition that requires NSR to consult further with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mobile District on Section 404 permitting requirements.

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