

From: [Tabachnick, Alan](#)
To: [Peter Baker](#); [Xiomara Roche](#); [C. Montange](#)
Cc: [Gosselin, Danielle](#); [Higgins, Michael](#)
Subject: Meeting Request
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:24:00 PM

Thank you for reaching out and requesting a meeting with the Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) regarding the proposed abandonment of the Harsimus branch (AB 167 1189X) in Jersey City, New Jersey. We are unable to meet with you to discuss potential settlement activities between certain outside parties, as neither OEA nor the Board has any role in such settlement discussions. OEA's role is to ensure that the Board's obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) are satisfied for Board proceedings. After conducting its environmental and historic reviews, OEA makes recommendations to the Board which then considers those recommendations in deciding the merits of the proceeding – in this case, a request for authority to abandon a rail line. OEA does not participate in or comment upon settlement negotiations and agreements between parties outside of the Section 106 and NEPA processes.

As you know, OEA is currently in the process of completing the Section 106 process with the preparation and execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). We are updating the draft MOA to reflect changes related to the resolution of the Section 110(k) [of the NHPA] issue by the Board, and to address comments from the consulting parties on the draft issued in October 2020. We anticipate circulating this revised document shortly and will continue to involve the consulting parties in the remainder of the Section 106 process.

Any questions outside of the Section 106 process and relating to the Board's consideration of the merits of the abandonment, should be addressed to the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance (OPAGAC). Feel free to reach out to Michael Higgins in OPAGAC at 202-245-0284, or via email at michael.higgins@stb.gov for more information and guidance on this pending case.

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