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8/17/2023

307147

Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
September 18, 2023
Part of
Public Record

Re: STB Docket No AB-180 and
STB Docket No AB-768

Dear Surface Transportation Board:

RailStar Corporation is herewith notifying the STB of its objections to abandonment of the rails in the areas included in the above dockets.

1. RailStar Corporation is a private company that has made significant investments in the Lewis County area. These investments total about \$700,000 and are centered on railroad tourism. They involve actual purchases of trackage and facilities in the Lowville area. Railway stock and locomotives are housed in our roundhouse and engine shop
2. We also have purchased a large number (30) rail bikes to be used on the railways that are being abandoned for freight service. Additionally, we purchased a restaurant with shoreline on the Black River that also will be used for tourism on the river and rail facilities.
3. Our main focus was intended to utilize the trackage from Lowville to Carthage, NY. The larger equipment would use most of the track with the rail bikes using smaller portions.
4. If any portion of the MAM or L&BR are torn up, you lose the continuity required for operations and maintenance of equipment.
5. RailStar would also be working with the Historical Society to co-mingle certain operations of the L&BR. Having sections of the track removed from either line seriously impacts on operational flexibility or prohibits it entirely.
6. Finally, there are some areas where trackage could coexist with parallel trail sections. For example, the Village and Town of Lowville from downtown to East Road is open and more easily secured. It also could be a good short run for a trolley type operation.

RailStar has had previous discussions with the track owner and the County on possible track leasing. We hope the Surface Transportation Board will consider that there is a large percentage of local population that is strongly against the County's position on the railroad and this is expected to grow.

Thank you for your time. I certify that both parties on this docket have been served by mail August 18, 2023.

Sincerely,


Ronald J. Trotter
President