

OEA
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SERVICE DATE – DECEMBER 14, 2023

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB 55 (Sub-No. 813X)

**CSX Transportation, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—
in Worcester, Mass.**

ABANDONMENT TYPE

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

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

(X) NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

() NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) filed a notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50 seeking exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a line of railroad in Worcester County, Massachusetts. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 0.38 miles from milepost QBU 4.2 to milepost QBU 4.58 on the Albany Division, Boston Subdivision, Fitchburg Branch. The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served a Draft EA for this proceeding on November 24, 2023, for public review and comment. In the Draft EA, OEA recommended one environmental condition and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Modifications to the Draft EA

The typo referencing the Flats Industrial Railroad Company (FIR) in the first sentence of the Draft EA has been corrected. CSXT is the applicant in this proceeding, not FIR.

Conclusions

The Draft EA comment period has ended. Accordingly, OEA recommends that the following condition previously recommended in the Draft EA should be imposed upon any decision granting abandonment authority:¹

¹ If an interim trail use agreement under 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d) and 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29 is reached for the Line (or a portion thereof), compliance with this condition is not required with respect to any portion of the Line covered by the interim trail use agreement for the duration of the agreement.

CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures, and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) that are eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places until the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, has been completed. CSXT shall report back to the Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) regarding any consultations with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the public. CSXT may not file its consummation notice or initiate any salvage activities related to abandonment (including removal of tracks and ties) until the Section 106 process has been completed and the Board has removed this condition.

If the above condition is imposed, OEA believes that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

By the Board, Danielle Gosselin, Director, Office of Environmental Analysis.