

February 27, 2025

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February 27, 2025
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VIA E-FILE

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: **Docket No. AB 1296X**
R. J. Corman Railroad Property, LLC – Abandonment Exemption – in
Scott, Campbell, and Anderson Counties, Tenn.

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing on behalf of R. J. Corman Railroad Property, LLC (“RJC Railroad Property”) in connection with the above-referenced railroad abandonment proceeding to request relief from the consummation notice requirement set forth at 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29(e)(2). Specifically, for the reasons set forth below, RJC Railroad Property requests a one-year extension of the applicable consummation notice deadline until March 1, 2026.

In February of 2020, RJC Railroad Property filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. part 1152 subpart F – Exempt Abandonments to abandon the Oneida Line. The Oneida Line extends from milepost 0.96 at or near Oneida, Tennessee, to the end of the line at milepost 42.0 at or near Devonia, Tennessee, a distance of approximately 41.05 miles in Scott, Campbell, and Anderson Counties, Tennessee. The Oneida Line has a single rail connection at Oneida, Tennessee with Norfolk Southern Railway Company. A notice of interim trail use (NITU) was issued for the Oneida Line on or about April 17, 2020 and remains in effect, as a result of extensions granted by the Board, until April 17, 2025.

Following extensive litigation, permission to abandon the Oneida Line was granted on March 1, 2024, when the Board approved the abandonment of a segment of rail line running along Beech Fork in Campbell County, Tenn. *See R. J. Corman Railroad Property, LLC – Abandonment Exemption – in Scott, Campbell, and Anderson Counties, Tenn.*, Docket No. AB 1296X (STB served Nov. 17, 2022) and *R. J. Corman Railroad Property, LLC – Abandonment Exemption – in Campbell County, Tenn.*, Docket No. AB 1296 (Sub-No. 1X) (STB served March 1, 2024).¹ Prior to March 1, 2024, RJC Railroad Property did not have authority to begin salvage operations over the 41.05 miles of rail line spanning three counties in rural Tennessee.

¹ RJC Railroad Property filed its Notice of Consummation for the approximately 3.67 miles of rail line in Campbell County, Tenn. with the Board on February 14, 2025.

Promptly after receiving abandonment authority, RJC Railroad Property instructed its third-party contractor to initiate salvage operations on the Oneida Line. Despite best efforts, the salvage operations are not complete. The Oneida Line has had no rail service over it since 2013 and spans a difficult rural terrain, often following a river. Access to the rail line by RJC Railroad Property's contractor is impacted by that terrain and weather conditions. Even so, progress has been steady and significant. All rail except approximately ten to twelve miles of the over forty miles of rail has been removed. Approximately 20 miles of railroad ties remain in place. The contractor is also responsible for removing and repairing railroad crossings. In order to complete repairs to the crossings, the contractor needs access to nearby asphalt plants to repave the crossings. Asphalt plants close in winter for several months due to weather conditions. In short, salvage operations have proceeded in an efficient and timely manner provided conditions are safe for crews to work.

As a result, RJC Railroad Property is not able to complete salvage operations by March 1, 2025, or within 60 days following April 17, 2025, which is the expiration of the NITU. As such, for good cause shown, RJC Railroad Property respectfully requests a one-year extension of the current deadline for filing a notice of consummation in this proceeding under March 1, 2026.²

Sincerely,

/s/ Catherine S. Wright
*Attorney for R. J. Corman Railroad
Property, LLC*

CSW/mp

cc: Parties of Record

² RJC Railroad Property is aware that Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning ("TCWP"), the current trail sponsor, recently sought an extension of time for the NITU and the Board held said request was premature. *See R. J. Corman Railroad Property, LLC – Abandonment Exemption – in Scott, Campbell, and Anderson Counties, Tenn.*, Docket No. AB 1296X (STB served Feb. 4, 2025). As RJC Railroad Property cannot assume TCWP will refile its extension request or that if it does, it will be granted, RJC Railroad Property believes the instant request is appropriate under the circumstances outlined in 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29(e)(2). In addition, RJC Railroad Property may need time to evaluate salvage operations if the Oneida Line is not railbanked.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on February 27, 2025, I served the foregoing using the below email addresses on all parties of record in this proceeding:

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/s/ Catherine S. Wright