

SERVICE DATE – MARCH 14, 2025

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 415X)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY—ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—
IN HENDERSON AND POLK COUNTIES, N.C.,
AND GREENVILLE AND SPARTANBURG COUNTIES, S.C.

Decided: March 14, 2025

On October 31, 2024, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) filed a verified notice of exemption pursuant to 49 C.F.R. part 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon an approximately 31.3-mile rail line extending from approximately milepost W 26.0 +/- to approximately milepost W 57.3 +/- in Henderson and Polk Counties, N.C., and Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, S.C. (the Line). Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on November 20, 2024 (89 Fed. Reg. 91,870). The exemption became effective on December 20, 2024.

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served a Draft Environmental Assessment on November 25, 2024, solicited public comments, and served a Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) on December 16, 2024, recommending that one condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority.¹ By decision served on December 19, 2024, the Board issued a notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) pursuant to the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d), and the Board's regulations at 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29, and imposed the condition recommended in the Final EA.

On March 6, 2025, OEA issued a Supplemental Final EA stating that it received a letter from the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) indicating that there may be geodetic survey markers in the area of the right-of-way that could be disturbed by the proposed abandonment. Accordingly, OEA recommends an additional condition be imposed requiring NSR to notify NGS at least 90 days prior to beginning abandonment-related salvage activities to allow time for any geodetic survey markers that may be present in the right-of-way to be preserved.

Consistent with OEA's recommendation, this proceeding will be reopened and the additional condition recommended in the Supplemental Final EA will be imposed. The proposed abandonment, if implemented as conditioned, will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

¹ The condition requires NSR to consult with the South Carolina Department of Transportation regarding its concerns about maintenance and safety of at-grade crossings.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding is reopened.
2. Upon reconsideration, the notice served and published in the Federal Register on November 20, 2024, exempting the abandonment of the Line described above, is made subject to the additional condition that NSR shall notify NGS at NGS.Infocenter@noaa.gov at least 90 days prior to beginning abandonment-related salvage activities.²
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

² 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 these condition(s) is not required with respect to any portion of the Line covered by the interim trail use agreement for the duration of the agreement.