

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB 55 (Sub-No. 819X)

**CSX Transportation, Inc. – Abandonment Exemption –
in Philadelphia County, Penn.**

BACKGROUND

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 Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 0.69 miles from milepost BCE 1.41 north of Wolf Street to milepost BCE 2.1 north of Tasker Street, on CSXT's Northern Region, Philadelphia Subdivision, Delaware Industrial Track (the Line). A map depicting the Line in relationship to the area served is appended to this Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA). If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties, and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The Line is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, between Interstate 95 and the Delaware River. According to CSXT the right-of-way is 60 feet wide. CSXT states that the Line was originally part of the Schuylkill River East Side Company which was established in 1886. Ownership of the Line was transferred several times over the years before being acquired by CSXT in 1987. CSXT indicates that when CSXT and Norfolk Southern Railway acquired Conrail in 1999, they both gained rail access to Philadelphia Ports, making the Line redundant. CSXT states that the last shipper on the Line stopped receiving cars in 2010 and that a portion of the track, between mileposts BCE 1.81 and BCE 2.1, was removed after it was disconnected at Columbus Boulevard. Based on a desktop review of the Line, OEA has determined that the only track remaining to be salvaged is located between Weccacoe Avenue and Columbus Boulevard, which is approximately 0.3 miles.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT submitted a combined environmental and historic report (E&H Report) that concludes the quality of the human environment would not be affected significantly as a result of the proposed abandonment of the Line, including salvage. CSXT served the E&H Report on a number of appropriate federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation

Board's (Board) environmental rules [49 C.F.R. § 1105.7(b)]¹ implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) has reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

Diversion of Traffic

According to CSXT, no local traffic has moved over the Line over the last two years, and there is no overhead traffic on the Line that would have to be rerouted. Therefore, the proposed abandonment would not result in the diversion of rail traffic to truck traffic that could result in significant impacts to air quality or the local transportation network. Nor would the proposed abandonment adversely impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities or the transportation of ozone-depleting materials.

Salvage Activities

Impacts from salvage and disposal of a rail line typically include removal of tracks and ties, removal of ballast, dismantling of any bridges or other structures that may be present on the rail right-of-way, and regrading of the right-of-way. Salvage may be performed within the right-of-way, or, if necessary, via the construction of new access points to the right-of-way. If abandonment authority is granted, CSXT plans to remove any rail and crossties that remains on the Line, and possibly the upper layer of ballast. CSXT does not intend to disturb any subgrade or subgrade structures or salvage any bridges trestles, culverts, and tunnels on the Line. Based on a desktop review, OEA has concluded that there are no bridges, trestles, culverts, or tunnels located on the Line.

Upon receiving abandonment authority, removal of track material would be accomplished by use of the right-of-way for access. No new access roads are contemplated. CSXT does not intend to disturb any of the underlying roadbed or perform any activities that would cause sedimentation or erosion of the soil and does not anticipate any dredging or use of fill in the removal of the track material.

CSXT states that it would transport crossties and/or other debris away from the Line and would not discard them along the right-of-way or place or leave them in streams or wetlands or along the banks of such waterways. Also, during track removal, appropriate measures would be implemented to prevent or control spills from fuels, lubricants, or any other pollutant materials from entering waterways.

Land Use

CSXT considers the proposed abandonment to be consistent with existing land use plans. CSXT requested comments on the proposed abandonment from the Philadelphia Department of

¹ The E&H Report is available for viewing on the Board's website at www.stb.gov by clicking "Search STB Records;" selecting "Filings" in the "Search for" dropdown menu; entering "AB" "55" "819" "X" sequentially in the four boxes for "Docket Number," then selecting "Search." The E&H Report was filed on April 4, 2025.

Planning and Development (PDPD). To date, OEA has not received a response. OEA is providing the PDPD a copy of this Draft EA for review.

CSXT notified the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the proposed abandonment by letter dated March 14, 2025. To date, OEA has not received a response. However, because the proposed abandonment is located in an urban area and no subgrade salvage activities are proposed, OEA concludes that the proposed abandonment would have no effect on prime agricultural land.

The Line is located within a Coastal Zone. CSXT notified the Pennsylvania Coastal Resource Management Program (PCRMP) of the proposed abandonment by letter dated March 14, 2025. To date, PCRMP has not provided comments. Accordingly, OEA is recommending that any decision granting abandonment authority include a condition requiring CSXT to consult with PCRMP and obtain state coastal management consistency certification, if necessary. OEA is providing a copy of this Draft EA to PCRMP for its review.

Hazardous Materials/Spills and Safety

CSXT states that the proposed abandonment would have no detrimental effects on public health and safety. There are no known hazardous waste sites or sites where there have been known hazardous material spills on the Line. Therefore, OEA concludes that the proposed abandonment is unlikely to affect the transportation of hazardous materials.

Biological Resources

CSXT requested comments from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the potential impact of the proposed abandonment to protected wildlife, including federally listed threatened and endangered species. The Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office of the USFWS sent CSXT an Official Species List (dated March 11, 2025) generated from USFWS' Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. To date, USFWS has not provided any additional comments. One proposed threatened species, monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), was identified by the field office that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. No critical habitat was identified within the area of the proposed abandonment.

To identify any changes to the species list generated in March 2025 and any wildlife refuges in the project area, OEA conducted its own search of the IPaC system.² No change to the species list was identified. OEA's search also confirmed that there were no wildlife refuges within the area of the proposed abandonment.

Because the Line is in an urban landscape and salvage activities are not proposed in any grasslands, shrublands, or forested habitat; no tree removal is contemplated; no subgrade salvage activities are proposed; and no critical habitat is present, OEA concludes that the proposed abandonment would have no effect on the monarch butterfly. OEA is providing a copy of this

² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Information for Planning and Consultation Tool (IPaC), <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov> (OEA accessed on June 25, 2025, Project Code: 2005-0113764.)

Draft EA to the USFWS, Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office and Pennsylvania Game Commission for its review.

CSXT notified the National Park Service (NPS) of the proposed abandonment and requested assistance in identifying any potential effects on wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests. To date, NPS has not provided comments. Because the Line does not cross any wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests, OEA believes that no such area would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

Water Resources

CSXT requested assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Philadelphia District in identifying whether permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) would be required for the proposed abandonment. To date, USACE has not replied. Because no instream work is contemplated; no bridge, viaduct, embankment, or tree removal is contemplated; the scope of salvage is limited; no subgrade salvage activities are proposed; no dredging or use of fill in the removal of the track material is contemplated; and no salvage debris will be discarded along the right-of-way or placed or left in streams or wetlands or along the banks of such waterways, OEA believes that abandonment-related salvage activities would not require a permit under section 404 of the CWA, and that no waterways, wetlands, or 100-year flood plains would be affected. OEA is providing USACE, Philadelphia District a copy of this Draft EA for its review.

CSXT requested assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Region 3 in identifying whether permits under Section 402 of the CWA are required for the proposed abandonment. By email received on April 3, 2024, USEPA responded that they had no comment.

By letter dated March 14, 2025, CSXT requested assistance from Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in identifying any potential effects on water quality standards. To date, DEP has not provided any comments. OEA is providing DEP a copy of this Draft EA for review.

Air Quality and Noise

OEA believes air emissions associated with abandonment-related salvage activities would be temporary and would not have a significant impact on air quality. Similarly, any noise related to abandonment-related salvage activities would also be temporary and should not have a significant impact on the area surrounding the proposed abandonment.

Summary

Based on all information available to date, OEA does not believe that the proposed abandonment would cause significant environmental impacts. In addition to the parties on the Board's service list for this proceeding, OEA is providing a copy of this Draft EA to the following agencies for review and comment: PDPD; PCRMP; USFWS, Pennsylvania

Ecological Services Field Office; USACE, Pennsylvania District; USEPA, Region 3; and Pennsylvania DEP.

HISTORIC REVIEW

CSXT served the E&H Report on the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO), pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c).³ Based on available information, the SHPO submitted comments stating that no historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) would be affected within the right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect, or APE) of the proposed abandonment.

Therefore, pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act 36 C.F.R. § 800.4(d)(1), and following consultation with the SHPO and the public, OEA has determined that the proposed abandonment would not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding as specified at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11(d), consists of CSXT's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this Draft EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public through posting on the Board's website www.stb.gov.

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.2, OEA conducted a search of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Tribal Directory Assessment Tool (TDAT) to identify federally recognized Tribes that may have ancestral connections to the project area.⁴ The database indicated that the following federally-recognized Tribes may have knowledge regarding properties of traditional religious and cultural significance within the right-of-way (the APE) of the proposed abandonment: Delaware Nation, Oklahoma; Delaware Tribe of Indians; and Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. Accordingly, OEA is sending a copy of this Draft EA to these Tribes for review and comment.

CONDITIONS

OEA recommends that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority:⁵

³ Applicants seeking authority from the Board to abandon railroad lines may act on behalf of the Board when complying with the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act. Applicants are authorized to initiate the Section 106 review process and carry out some of its steps, but the Board retains overall responsibility for the Section 106 review. See 36 C.F.R. § 800.2(c)(4); 49 C.F.R. part 1105; Delegation Letter (Dec. 9, 2009). The Delegation Letter can be found at a link on the bottom of the Board's website overseeing historic preservation at <https://www.stb.gov/resources/environmental/historic-preservation-overview>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Tribal Directory Assessment Tool, <https://egis.hud.gov/tdat> (last accessed June 25, 2025).

⁵ 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

Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1451 et seq.) and the Board's environmental regulations at 49 C.F.R. § 1105.9, CSXT Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) shall consult with the Pennsylvania Coastal Resource Management Program and obtain state coastal management consistency certification, if necessary. CSXT may not file its consummation notice or initiate any salvage activities related to abandonment (including removal of tracks and ties) until it reports the results of these consultations in writing to the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis and the Board has removed this condition.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, OEA concludes that, as currently proposed, and the recommended condition is imposed, abandonment of the Line would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 C.F.R. § 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Board's Federal Register notice of the proposed abandonment. The Federal Register notice is also issued as a Board decision and is available on the Board's website.⁶

TRAIL USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 C.F.R. § 1152.29). The Federal Register notice is also issued as a Board decision and is available on the Board's website.⁷

respect to any portion of the Line covered by the interim trail use agreement for the duration of the agreement.

⁶ Board decisions are available for viewing on the Board's website at <https://www.stb.gov> by clicking "Search STB Records;" selecting "Decisions" in the "Search for" dropdown menu; entering "AB" "55" "819" "X" sequentially in the four boxes for "Docket Number," then selecting "Search."

⁷ Id.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact this office directly at (202) 245-0238, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Assistance, Government Affairs, and Compliance, Washington, DC 20423.

COMMENTS

OEA encourages interested parties to submit their comments on the Draft EA electronically through the Board's website at <https://www.stb.gov/>. From the Board's home page, select "File an Environmental Comment" below the "Need Assistance?" button. Log-in accounts are not needed to file environmental comments electronically. Brief comments can be typed in the comment field, and lengthier comments can be attached as Word, Adobe Acrobat, or other file formats.

Alternatively, comments submitted by mail should be addressed to: Karen Stevens, Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001, Attention: Environment Filing, Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 819X). If you have any questions, please contact Karen Stevens by email at Karen.Stevens@stb.gov or by phone at 202-245-0304.

Date made available to the public: July 18, 2025.

Comment due date: August 1, 2025.

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

Attachment



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Legend

The Line

Note: Maps produced by the STB's Office of Environmental Analysis are based on information provided by the applicant and are for reference purposes only.



Philadelphia County



Pennsylvania