



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORTATION COMMAND
1 SOLDIER WAY
SCOTT AFB, IL 62225-5006

311016

17 March 2026

Chief of Case Administration
Office of Chief Counsel
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
March 17, 2026
Part of
Public Record

Re: *Canonie Atlantic Co. – Abandonment Exemption – in the City of Virginia Beach and the City of Norfolk, Virginia* Docket No. AB 1266 (Sub-No. 2X)

Re: *Buckingham Branch Railroad Company – Discontinuance Exemption – in the City of Virginia Beach and the City of Norfolk, Virginia* Docket No. AB 1349X

Dear Chief of Case Administration

On behalf of the Department of War (DoW) and U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), the Railroads for National Defense (RND) Program within the U.S. Army Transportation Command (ARTRANS) has an ongoing interest in America's rail network to ensure that it supports military readiness capability requirements for both defense deployment and peacetime needs.

The RND Program works with each military Service to identify its requirements for civil sector rail service. The Services' needs and requirements are then advocated for and integrated into civil sector plans, standards, programs, regulations, and rules. This advocacy is primarily accomplished through the designation of the Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET) and its associated Defense Connector lines.

The RND Program, in conjunction with ARTRANS's Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, monitors all filings with the Board to evaluate potential impacts to DoW equities. The RND Program serves as DoW's single manager for comments, filings, and participation in active Board proceedings. It analyzes all proposed railroad abandonments, discontinuances, mergers, and rulemaking changes to ensure there are no negative impacts to STRACNET or other DoW civil rail transportation requirements. When necessary, the RND Program participates and/or makes comments on active Board proceedings.

After reviewing the national defense and public interest benefits, the RND Program supports the abandonment exemption sought by Canonie Atlantic Company ("CAC") and the discontinuance exemption sought by Buckingham Branch Railroad Company ("Buckingham Branch") for the rail line in the above-referenced proceedings. In coordination with pertinent

offices within the Department of the Navy (“Navy”), the RND Program has determined that Government acquisition of a parcel of land containing a segment of the subject rail line is in the interest of national defense and is required to maintain the operational integrity of DoW’s mission.

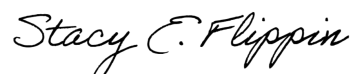
The Navy has entered into an agreement to acquire the parcel from CAC, which seeks expedited exempt abandonment approval from the Board to facilitate the transfer. The parcel is currently encumbered by a rail line owned by CAC and operated by Buckingham Branch as a line of common carrier under Board jurisdiction pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10501 and § 10901. Formal abandonment and discontinuance exemption under 49 U.S.C. § 10502 is first required to lawfully complete the land transaction. The segment of rail line is not designated as part of STRACNET or a Defense Connector line, and the Navy does not intend to use the segment for future commercial rail service.

Timely Board action will enable DoW to acquire and secure the property free of active rail operations and common carrier obligations, ensuring the efficient implementation of defense requirements. Expedited consideration is warranted given the national defense interest and the importance of completing the transfer within DoW’s operational timelines.

Additionally, in the unlikely event that requests for public use condition related to interim trail use/rail banking or offers of financial assistance are submitted, the RND Program strongly urges the Board to consider rejecting any such request. Specifically, the RND Program asks the Board to reject potential requests for public use condition related to interim trail use/rail banking due to the national defense and public benefit of the subsequent land transaction along with rejecting any potential offers of financial assistance, as future rail service is no longer required on the subject parcel. Rejection of any such request would support the request for expedited consideration of this proceeding based on the Navy’s operational requirements.

Should any questions arise regarding the RND Program’s comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (618) 220-5052 or by email at stacy.e.flippin.civ@army.mil. Thank you for your consideration of the enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing ARTRANS letter has been electronically filed with the Surface Transportation Board this 17th day of March, 2026, and served via email or regular mail upon all parties of record.

Stacy E. Flippin

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