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OEA

SERVICE DATE – JULY 17, 2026

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 424X)

**Norfolk Southern Railway Company– Abandonment Exemption –
in Polk County, Iowa**

Docket No. AB 414 (Sub. No. 9X)

**Iowa Interstate Railroad, LLC – Discontinuance Lease and Operation Authority –
in Polk County, Iowa**

ABANDONMENT TYPE

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

☐ Notice of Exemption ☒ Petition for Exemption ☐ Regulated Abandonment

☐ **NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

☒ **NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

In this proceeding, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) and Iowa Interstate Railroad, LLC (IAIS) jointly filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. § 10502 seeking exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 10903 in connection with the abandonment and discontinuance, respectively, of a line of railroad in Polk County, Iowa. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 12.2-miles from milepost DU 340.8 +/- to milepost DU 353.0 +/-, and together with the Clive Spur (no mileposts), are commonly referred to as the Grimes Line (the Line). The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served a Draft EA for this proceeding on June 12, 2026 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.

Comments on the Draft EA

By email on July 7, 2026, the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) submitted a comment stating that the documentation in the Environmental and Historic Report provided by NSR “does not meet the basic project documentation standards at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11 to support an agency’s determination of effect pursuant to section 106.” The SHPO further stated that its comment should be considered a “More Information Request (MIR),” and requested that

additional information be submitted to the SHPO, including a determination of effect. Therefore, the Section 106 process has not been completed, and OEA continues to recommend that the Section 106 condition previously recommended in the Draft EA be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

Conclusions

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

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) 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.

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.

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.