



HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

312382

820 OLD HIGHWAY 75 S
CROOKSTON, MN 56716

09/16/2026

U.S. Department of Transportation
Surface Transportation Board
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

ENTERED
Office of Chief Counsel
September 18, 2026
Part of
Public Record

Re: Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc. Abandonment in Polk County, [AB-497 (Sub-No. 8X)]

Dear Secretary:

This request is filed on behalf of **Polk County**, which is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as "proponent."

Proponent requests for issuance of a Public Use Condition as well as an Interim Trail Use Condition rather than an outright abandonment authorization between Shelly, MN (milepost 40.20) and Climax, MN (milepost 51.34).

A. Request For Public Use Condition

Proponent asks the STB to find that this property is suitable for other public use, specifically trail use, and to place the following conditions on the abandonment:

1. An order prohibiting the carrier from disposing of the corridor, other than the tracks, ties and signal equipment, except for public use on reasonable terms. Justification for this condition is: Polk County has a trail system currently for ATV and Snowmobile use. It is also putting together an Active Transportation Plan to include off road Multi-Use Trails. This corridor would be beneficial to retain for trail uses. The time period sought is 180 days from the effective date of the abandonment authorization. Proponent needs this much time: to begin negotiations with Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.
2. An order barring removal or destruction of potential trail-related structures such as bridges, trestles, culverts and tunnels. The justification for this condition is that these structures have considerable value for recreational trail purposes. The time period requested is 180 days from the effective date of the abandonment authorization for the same reason as indicated above.

B. Request For Interim Trail Use

The railroad right-of-way in this proceeding is suitable for railbanking. In addition to the public use conditions sought above, proponent also makes the following request:

FILING FEE WAIVED

STATEMENT OF WILLINGNESS TO ASSUME

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order to establish interim trail use and railbanking under section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C.

§1247(d), and 49 CFR §1152.29 **Polk County**, is willing to assume full responsibility for management of, for any legal liability arising out of the transfer or use of (unless the user is immune from liability, in which case it need only indemnify the railroad against any potential liability], and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against the right-of-way owned by and operated by Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.

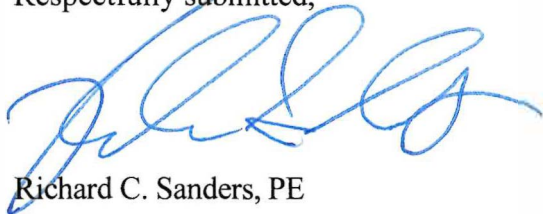
The property, known as the Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc., extends from railroad milepost 40.20 near Shelly, MN to railroad milepost 51.34 near Climax, MN, a distance of 11.14 miles in Norman and Polk Counties, . The right-of-way is part of a line of railroad proposed for abandonment in STB Docket No. AB- 497 (Sub-No. 8X).

A map depicting the right-of-way is attached.

Polk County acknowledges that use of the right-of-way is subject to the user's continuing to meet its responsibilities described above and subject to possible future reconstruction and reactivation of the right-of-way for rail service.

By my signature below, I certify service upon Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc. P.O Box 705, Crookston, MN 56716, by U.S. Mail, postage pre-paid, first class, this 28th day of July, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Sanders', is written over the printed name.

Richard C. Sanders, PE

cc: Parties of Record

Norman County Highway Department

Polk County Highway Department

