

SERVICE DATE – OCTOBER 6, 2026

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 423X)

THE ALABAMA GREAT SOUTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY—ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION—IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LA.

Decided: October 6, 2026

On August 28, 2026, the Alabama Great Southern Railroad Company (AGS) filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. part 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon rail service over an approximately 3.60-mile rail line, extending from milepost NN 35.31+/- to milepost NN 36.66+/- and milepost NA 36.00 to milepost NA 38.25+/-, in St. Tammany Parish, La. (the Line).¹ As explained below, this proceeding, including environmental review, will be held in abeyance, the effective date of the exemption will be postponed until further order of the Board, and AGS will be directed to provide additional information.

It appears that the Line connects at milepost NA 38.25 to a stub-ended right-of-way (the Segment), which is railbanked pursuant to the National Trails System Act (Trails Act), 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d), and in use as the Tammany Trace, a recreational trail. See Ill. Cent. R.R.—Aban. Exemption—in St. Tammany Par., La., AB 43 (Sub-No. 154X), slip op. at 1-2 (STB served Aug. 11, 2017); (Verified Notice, Ex. D, Attach. 1, Env't & Hist. Rep. at 5 & n.7 (describing plans to use the Line to extend Tammany Trace trail)). Railbanked lines remain within the Board's jurisdiction as part of the interstate rail network and, under the Trails Act, cannot be treated as abandoned. See 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d); GNP RLY, Inc.—Aban. Exemption—in King Cnty., Wash., AB 1316X, slip op. at 1 (STB served Apr. 11, 2022) (citing N. Coast R.R. Auth.—Aban. Exemption—in Mendocino, Trinity, & Humboldt Cntys., Cal., AB 1305X, slip op. at 4 (STB served Aug. 26, 2021)).

Here, it appears that the Line may provide the Segment with its sole connection to the rest of the interstate rail network. As a result, the abandonment of the Line, if consummated, could isolate the railbanked Segment from the interstate rail network. AGS will, therefore, be directed to file a supplement by October 16, 2026, addressing whether the proposed abandonment of the Line would leave the Segment stranded and, if so, how that would affect

¹ In 1994, the Board's predecessor, the Interstate Commerce Commission, authorized AGS to acquire the Line from the Illinois Central Railroad Company and operate it. See Ala. Great S. R.R.—Acquis. Exemption—Ill. Cent. R.R., FD 32410, slip op. at 1-2 (ICC served Feb. 1, 1994). In 2015, AGS was authorized to discontinue service over the Line. See Ala. Great S. R.R.—Discontinuance of Serv. Exemption—in St. Tammany Parish, La., AB 290 (Sub-No. 371X) (STB served Jan. 2, 2015).

AGS's abandonment exemption request. See, e.g., Elk River R.R.—Aban. Exemption—in Kanawha & Clay Cntys., W. Va., AB 1314X, slip op. at 3-4 (STB served Mar. 25, 2022) (rejecting a verified notice of exemption because abandonment would have resulted in a stranded segment). In the meantime, this proceeding, including the environmental review, will be held in abeyance and the effective date of the exemption will be postponed pending further order of the Board.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding, including the environmental review, is held in abeyance, and the effective date of the exemption is postponed until further order of the Board.
2. AGS is directed to file a supplement to its verified notice, as described above, by October 16, 2026.
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.