

EO-1164



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

March 16, 2009

Jonathan Crum
Federal Highway Administration
Pennsylvania Division
228 Walnut Street, Room 508
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1720

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35116, R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Pennsylvania Lines, Inc. – Petition for Exemption to Construct and Operate a Rail Line between Wallacetown (Clearfield County) and Gorton (Centre County), Pennsylvania

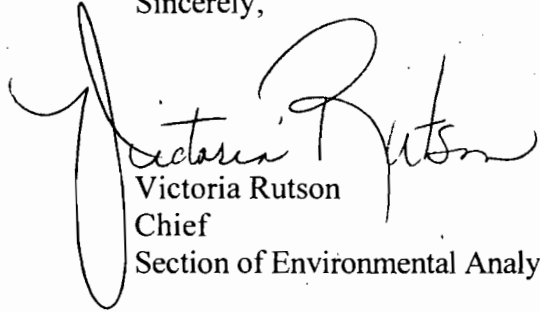
Dear Mr. Crum:

Thank you for your February 19, 2009 letter regarding the proposed construction and operation of approximately 20 miles of the former Beech Creek Branch Line in Clearfield and Centre Counties, Pennsylvania. The proposed rail line would serve a new quarry, landfill and industrial park located near Gorton in Rush Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania. In your letter, you request that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Pennsylvania Division, be permitted to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. The Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) accepts your request but would like to address the alternatives mentioned in your letter.

Pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.6, SEA typically grants cooperating agency status to agencies with special expertise or jurisdiction by law. In your letter, you indicate that FHWA's request to become a cooperating agency is based on the reasonable and feasible alternatives listed in the draft Scope of Study for the EIS. Specifically, you mention the two no-build alternatives because if either no-build alternative is selected as the preferred alternative, it would result in an action by FHWA. Please understand that since we are at the first stage of the EIS process, we included a wide range of alternatives in the draft Scope of Study. As we gather more information, we may end up eliminating some of the alternatives if we determine that they are not reasonable or feasible. We will update you on our alternatives analysis as we proceed with the Board's environmental review.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Danielle Gosselin of my staff at (202) 245-0300. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: Kevin Starner, Skelly & Loy, Inc.