



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

March 19, 2020

Marlys Osterhues
Chief, Environmental and Corridor Planning
Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Program Delivery
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
W36-317
Washington DC 20590

**RE: STB Docket No. FD 36328, Ken Tenn Regional Rail Partners, Inc. —
Construction and Operation Exemption — In Obion County, Tenn. and
Fulton County, Ky; Cooperating Agency Request**

Dear Ms. Osterhues:

The Kenn Tenn Regional Rail Partners, Inc. (KTRRP or Applicant) intends to file a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) under 49 U.S.C. § 10502 for authority to construct and operate an approximately 11.4 miles of common carrier rail line in Obion County, Tennessee and Fulton County, Kentucky (the Proposed Line). As part of its licensing process, the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) will conduct an environmental review of the Proposed Line in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105. OEA will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Line, which includes KTRRP's Proposed Route (see attached map), as well as other reasonable and feasible alternatives that may be identified during project planning. We have not yet determined whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA) is warranted.

KTRRP has recently informed OEA that it may apply to the United States Department of Transportation for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant to construct the Proposed Line. If the grant is awarded, we believe the project would fall under your jurisdictional authority. Therefore, consistent with 40 C.F.R. § 1501.6, we are inviting the Federal Railroad Administration to be a cooperating agency.

On February 28, 2020, OEA sent 23 consultation letters to various federal, state and local agencies, and five federally recognized tribes to request information on the resources that may be affected by the proposed project, identify permits and approvals that could be required of the Applicant, and determine what studies will need to be undertaken. This information will help determine whether an EIS or an EA should be prepared.

Description of the Proposed Project

As background, KTRRP is a non-profit corporation created by the Fulton County Industrial Development Authority of Kentucky and the Industrial Development Board of the City of Union City, Tennessee and will manage the project. Approximately 1.32 miles of KTRRP's Proposed Route would be built over existing but abandoned former right-of-way once owned by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The right-of-way runs in a north/south direction, closely paralleling the eastern edge of KY State Highway 125 in Fulton County, KY. The remaining segments of KTRRP's Proposed Route would be constructed over new right-of-way to the north and south of the abandoned segment. KTRRP anticipates that rail traffic would consist of one daily roundtrip and that commodities would include agricultural and industrial materials and products.

As a related but separate project, KTRRP also intends to rehabilitate another segment of deteriorated but existing track currently operated by the Tennken Railroad and the Indiana Business Railroad, Inc. doing business as the Union City Terminal Railroad.¹ The Tennken Railroad will connect to a soon-to-be constructed line that was authorized by the Board in 2016. When constructed by Northwest Tennessee Regional Port Authority (NWTRPA), the Board-authorized line will serve the Port of Cates Landing on the Mississippi River. Ultimately, the KTRRP Line would join the Tennken Railroad with the Union City Terminal Railroad to create a 46.1-mile loop that would connect with the Canadian National Railroad's Illinois Central Railroad subsidiary at both Dyersburg and Rives, TN.

KTRRP's project is intended to bring cost effective rail service to the area; support regional economic development; and improve transportation, safety and energy consumption by alleviating highway travel of large commercial trucks on roadways, particularly TN State Highway 5/KY State Highway 125.

We look forward to hearing from you within the next 30 days regarding FRA's participation in this project as a cooperating agency. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Diana Wood, OEA Project Manager at 202-245-0302 or by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Map Attachment

¹ This is a separate action that does not require Board approval.