



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

Catawba Indian Nation
Tribal Administrator, Elizabeth Harris
996 Avenue Of The Nations
Rock Hill, SC 29730

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Ms. Harris:

On August 3, 2017 the Palmetto Railways (Palmetto or Applicant) filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board), pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10502 for authority to construct and operate a 22.7-mile new rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Charleston District, are beginning the environmental review of the proposed rail line construction project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and related laws and regulations.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the proposed rail line project and request information from your tribe on resources that could be affected by the proposed project.

Project Background

The proposed rail line would be a short-line rail track that begins at a new connection to the A-Line of CSX Transportation (CSXT) (through the CSXT Cross Subdivision connection), and ends within the Camp Hall Commerce Park, an industrial park currently under development in Ridgville near Interstate 26. The connection to CSXT would occur on the Santee Cooper property adjacent to its Cross Generating Station, and would cross the Diversion Canal between Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie, running south-southwest. South of the Diversion Canal, the right-of-way traverses the unincorporated rural community of Cross. Beyond the Cross community, the proposed line passes through a mix of commercial, residential and silvicultural properties before reaching the Camp Hall Commerce Park.

The area is primarily covered by forests, forested wetlands, and open water. The proposed rail line crosses US Highway 176, SC Highway 311, and Old Highway 6, 15 secondary

roads and 21 minor forestry/agricultural roads. The entire line would be located within Berkeley County. See Figure A, which shows Palmetto Railways' proposed route in the "Cross Corridor" that Palmetto Railways developed as part of its Alternative Analysis, and Figure B, which depicts the additional alternatives studied by Palmetto Railways.

The proposed project is intended to bring rail service to the industrial park, to support the area's infrastructure needs and to alleviate highway congestion involving large commercial trucks in the area.

Environmental Review Process

OEA and the Corps will work as joint-lead agencies to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including any reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed route pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.), the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105, the Corps' permitting authority under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230), and other applicable federal and state laws.

This letter begins the process by which OEA and the Corps will assess the potential environmental effects, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the proposed rail line construction and operation. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether any resources of concern to your tribe may be affected by the proposed project and welcome information on any additional issues or concerns that you consider appropriate.

To assist in your review of the proposed project, please review the additional information filed by the Applicant in support of its proposal. This information may be found on the Board and Corps' Project website at www.CampHallRailNEPA.com.

Request for Comments

The Board is also interested in knowing whether your tribe is interested in consulting with us regarding the broader range of impacts assessed under NEPA including those to tribal lands and resources. To assist you in your response, I have attached a questionnaire regarding any future involvement your tribe may want in the overall NEPA process. We respectfully request you complete the questionnaire and return it by **October 8, 2017**, so that we may be able to schedule any meetings, site visits, or surveys; conduct necessary follow-up activities; and incorporate your response into the scope of study, as appropriate. The Board will also be initiating consultation with Consulting Parties under the National Historic Preservation Act, including any tribe that attaches religious and cultural significance to historic properties that may be affected by this undertaking.

September 8, 2017

Page 3

Please send your written comments to Diana Wood, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental analysis, by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov, or by mail to:

Ms. Diana Wood
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 36095
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

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We look forward to your participation in the environmental review process. If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call, please feel free to contact Diana Wood by phone at 202-245-0302 or by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov or the Corps' project manager, Courtney Stevens by phone at 843-329-8027 or by email at Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson".

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternative Analysis Map

Consultation Questionnaire

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Elizabeth Harris

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

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Name of the designated contact for Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line:

_____ Phone: _____

Please Print Name

E-mail: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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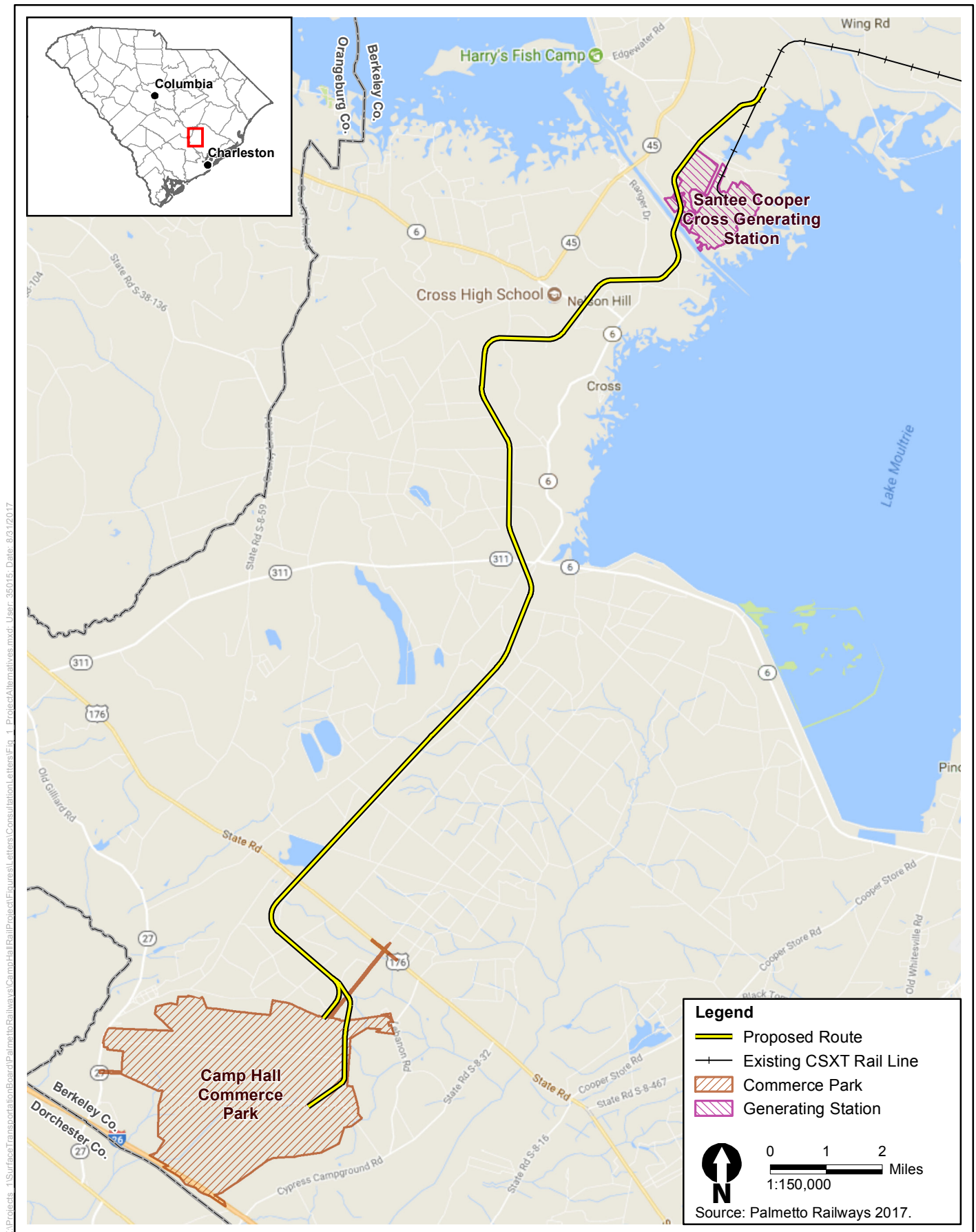


Figure A
Palmetto Railways Proposed Route



Figure B
Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

Catawba Indian Nation
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Wenonah Haire
1536 Tom Steven Rd
Rock Hill, SC 29730

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Ms. Haire:

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Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

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Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternative Analysis Map

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CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Wenonah Haire

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

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Please Print Name

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

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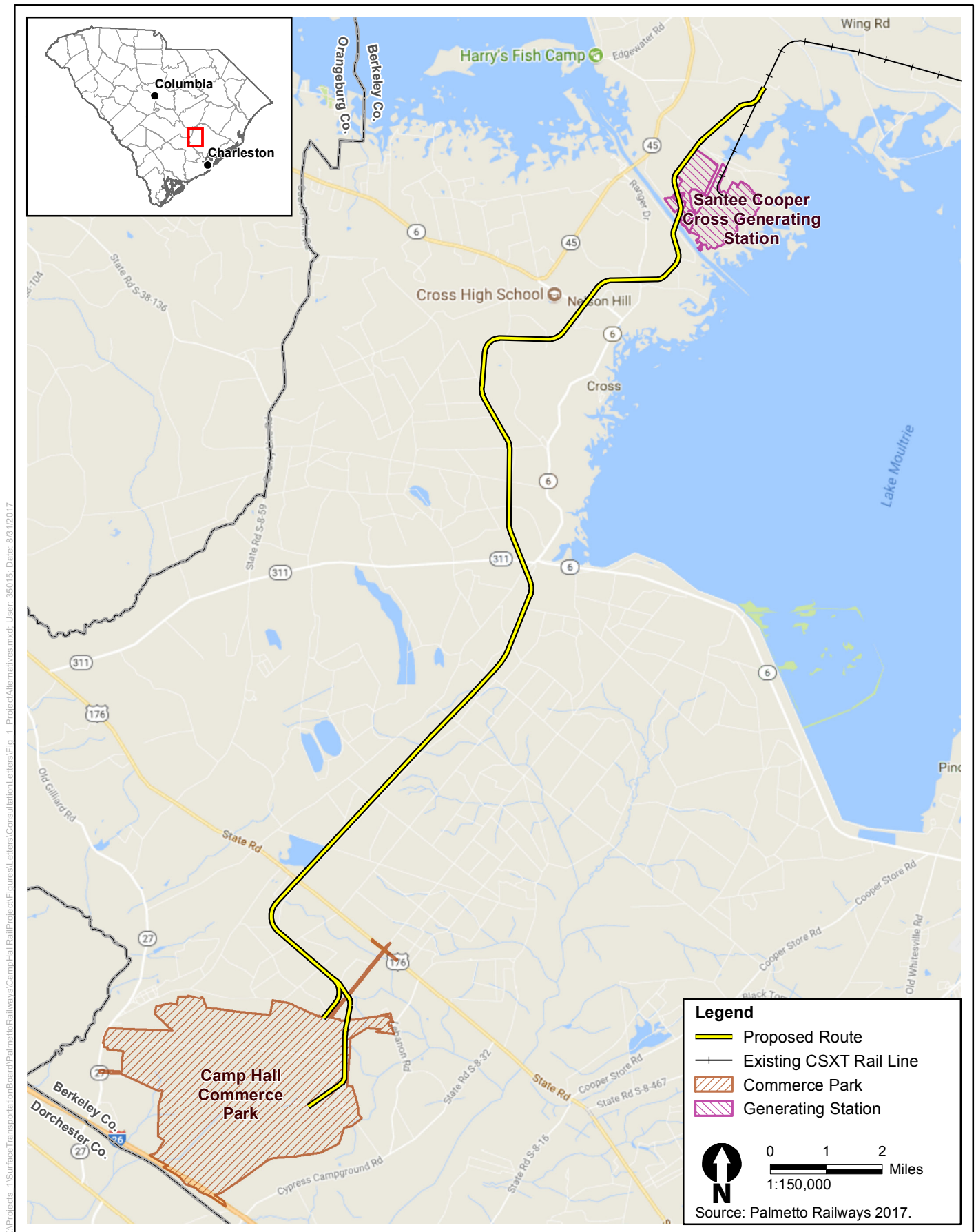




Figure B

Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Russell Townsend
PO Box 455
Cherokee, NC 28719

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Mr. Townsend:

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Sincerely,

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Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternative Analysis Map

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CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Russell Townsend

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

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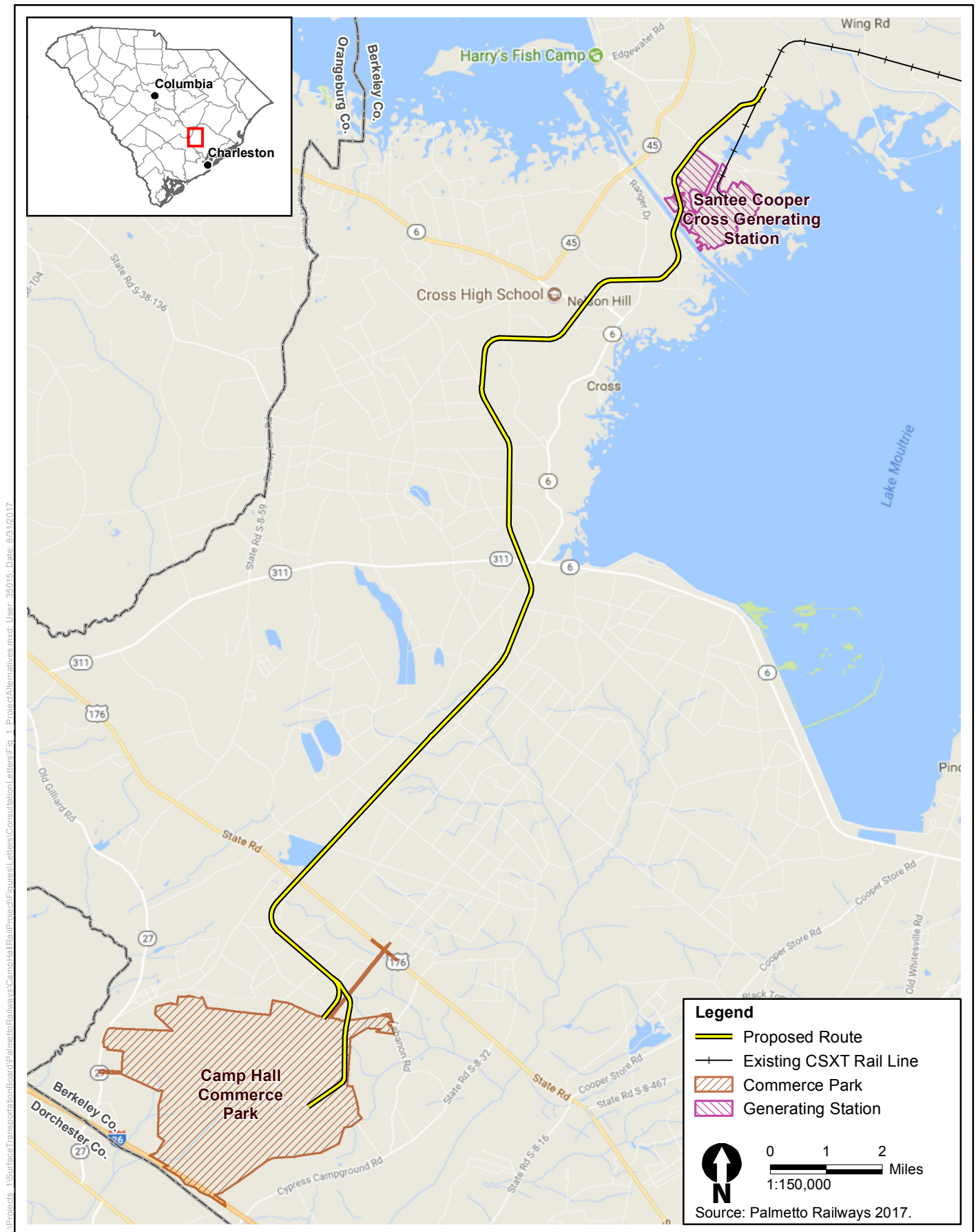
Please Print Name

E-mail: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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Docket No. FD 36095
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9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Robin Dushane
12705 East 705 Road
Wyandotte, OK 74370

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Ms. Dushane:

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Victoria Rutson
Director
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Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternative Analysis Map

Consultation Questionnaire

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Robin Dushane

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

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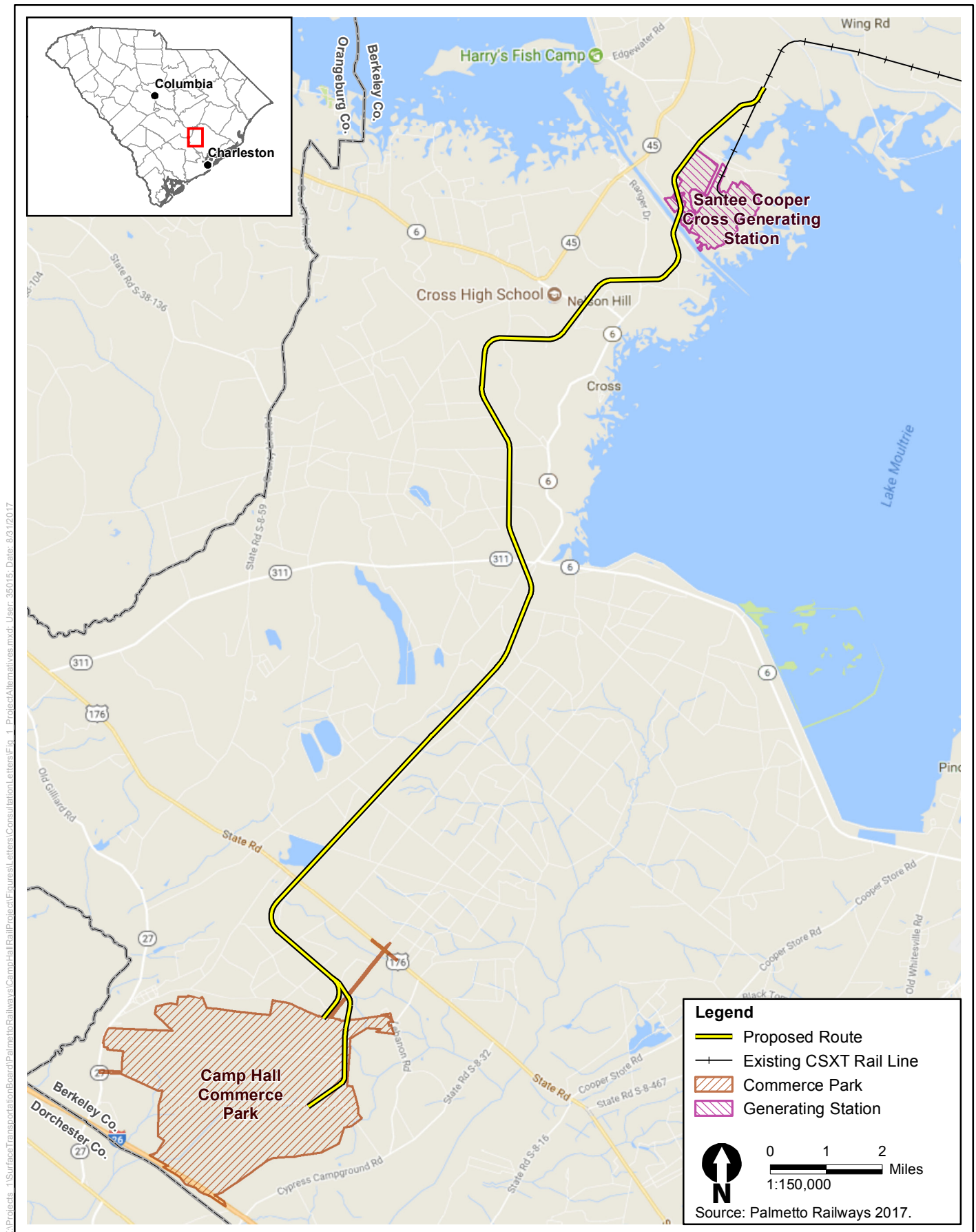


Figure A
Palmetto Railways Proposed Route



Figure B
Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Corain Lowe-Zepeda
PO Box 580
Okmulgee, OK 74447

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Corain Lowe-Zepeda:

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We look forward to your participation in the environmental review process. If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call, please feel free to contact Diana Wood by phone at 202-245-0302 or by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov or the Corps' project manager, Courtney Stevens by phone at 843-329-8027 or by email at Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson".

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternative Analysis Map

Consultation Questionnaire

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Corain Lowe-Zepeda

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

Please check all the appropriate response(s) that apply from the list below and use the back of this form or additional sheets if you wish to make comments:

- _____ We have no interests associated with Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line and further consultation with our Tribe is not required.
- _____ We want to continue to receive project information by email and participate in the public involvement process.
- _____ We want to continue to receive project information by U.S. mail and participate in the public involvement process.
- _____ We have an interest in Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line and want to participate in government-to-government consultation.

Name of the designated contact for Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line:

_____ Phone: _____

Please Print Name

E-mail: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please mail to: Ms. Diana Wood
Docket No. FD 36095
Surface Transportation Board
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

Or email to: Diana.Wood@stb.gov

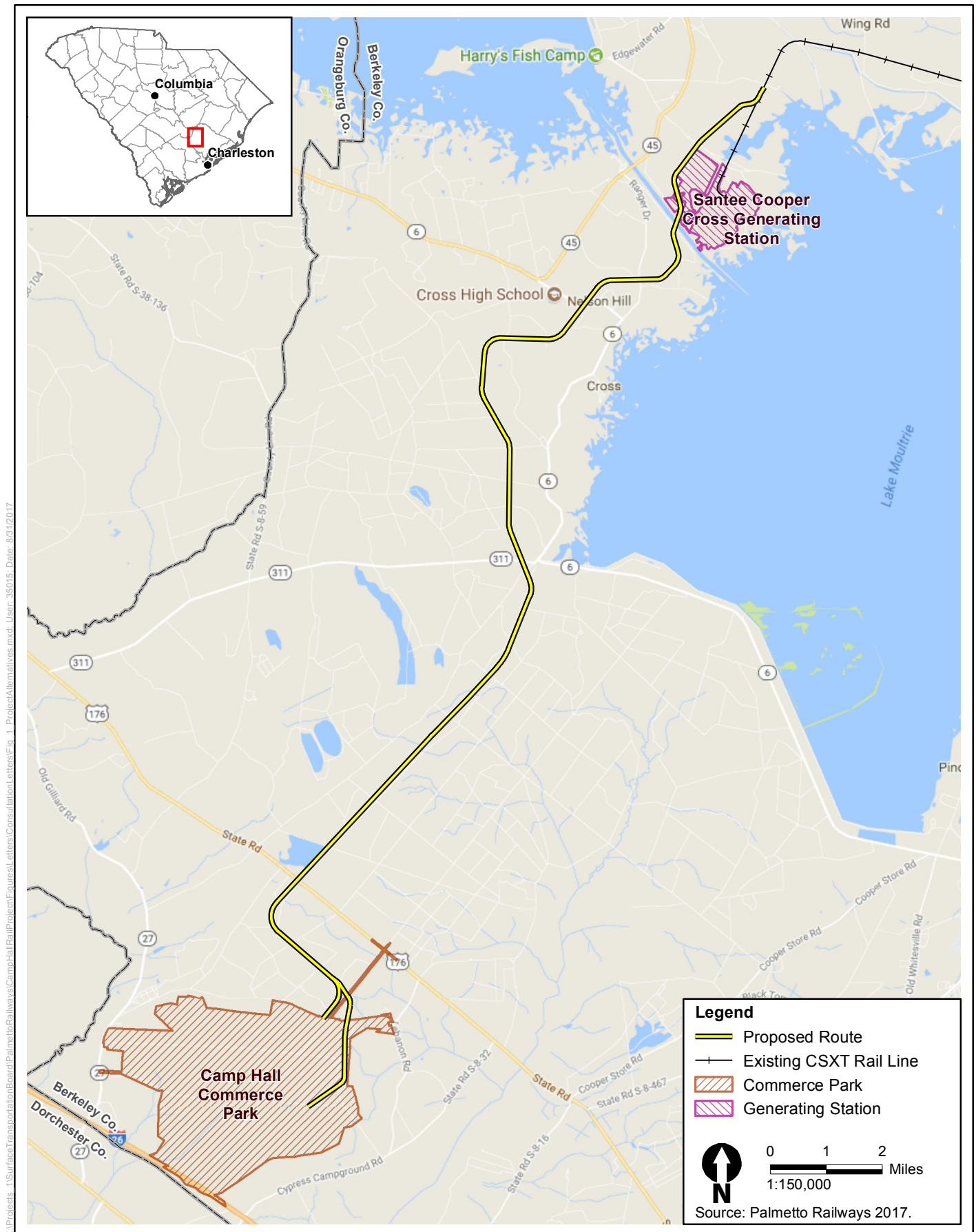


Figure A
Palmetto Railways Proposed Route



Figure B

Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

September 8, 2017

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Joe Bunch
PO Box 455
Cherokee, NC 28719

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Dear Mr. Bunch:

On August 3, 2017 the Palmetto Railways (Palmetto or Applicant) filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board), pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10502 for authority to construct and operate a 22.7-mile new rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Charleston District, are beginning the environmental review of the proposed rail line construction project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and related laws and regulations.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the proposed rail line project and request information from your tribe on resources that could be affected by the proposed project.

Project Background

The proposed rail line would be a short-line rail track that begins at a new connection to the A-Line of CSX Transportation (CSXT) (through the CSXT Cross Subdivision connection), and ends within the Camp Hall Commerce Park, an industrial park currently under development in Ridgeville near Interstate 26. The connection to CSXT would occur on the Santee Cooper property adjacent to its Cross Generating Station, and would cross the Diversion Canal between Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie, running south-southwest. South of the Diversion Canal, the right-of-way traverses the unincorporated rural community of Cross. Beyond the Cross community, the proposed line passes through a mix of commercial, residential and silvicultural properties before reaching the Camp Hall Commerce Park.

The area is primarily covered by forests, forested wetlands, and open water. The proposed rail line crosses US Highway 176, SC Highway 311, and Old Highway 6, 15 secondary

roads and 21 minor forestry/agricultural roads. The entire line would be located within Berkeley County. See Figure A, which shows Palmetto Railways' proposed route in the "Cross Corridor" that Palmetto Railways developed as part of its Alternative Analysis, and Figure B, which depicts the additional alternatives studied by Palmetto Railways.

The proposed project is intended to bring rail service to the industrial park, to support the area's infrastructure needs and to alleviate highway congestion involving large commercial trucks in the area.

Environmental Review Process

OEA and the Corps will work as joint-lead agencies to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including any reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed route pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.), the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105, the Corps' permitting authority under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230), and other applicable federal and state laws.

This letter begins the process by which OEA and the Corps will assess the potential environmental effects, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the proposed rail line construction and operation. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether any resources of concern to your tribe may be affected by the proposed project and welcome information on any additional issues or concerns that you consider appropriate.

To assist in your review of the proposed project, please review the additional information filed by the Applicant in support of its proposal. This information may be found on the Board and Corps' Project website at www.CampHallRailNEPA.com.

Request for Comments

The Board is also interested in knowing whether your tribe is interested in consulting with us regarding the broader range of impacts assessed under NEPA including those to tribal lands and resources. To assist you in your response, I have attached a questionnaire regarding any future involvement your tribe may want in the overall NEPA process. We respectfully request you complete the questionnaire and return it by **October 8, 2017**, so that we may be able to schedule any meetings, site visits, or surveys; conduct necessary follow-up activities; and incorporate your response into the scope of study, as appropriate. The Board will also be initiating consultation with Consulting Parties under the National Historic Preservation Act, including any tribe that attaches religious and cultural significance to historic properties that may be affected by this undertaking.

Please send your written comments to Diana Wood, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental analysis, by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov, or by mail to:

Ms. Diana Wood
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 36095
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

You may also submit comments electronically through the Board's Web site at www.stb.gov by clicking on the "E-Filing" quick link on the right-hand side of the home page and then selecting "Environmental Comments." Brief comments may be typed within the comment field provided, or alternatively, you may attach comments as Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat files.

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Director
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Joe Bunch

Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways—Construction and Operation Exemption—In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Preliminary Consultation

Project Name: Palmetto Railways' proposed rail line in Berkeley County, South Carolina

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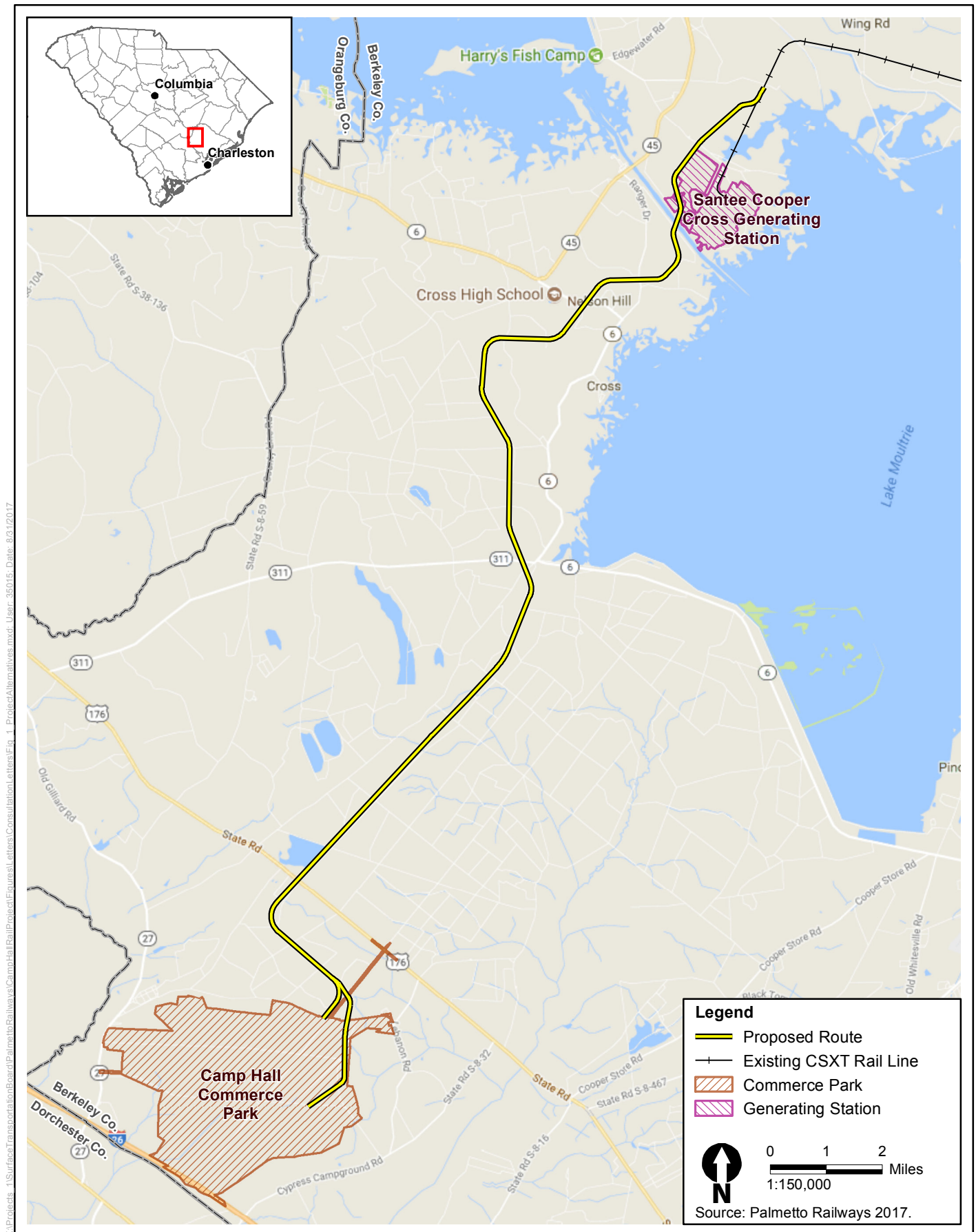


Figure A
Palmetto Railways Proposed Route

