



***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

Federal Highway Administration  
Emily Lawton  
Division Administrator  
1835 Assembly St  
Ste 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

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

Dear Ms. Lawton:

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, request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, and identify permits and approvals that could be required of the Applicant.

**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 and 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

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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.

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Please send your written comments to Diana Wood, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental analysis, by email at [Diana.Wood@stb.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil).

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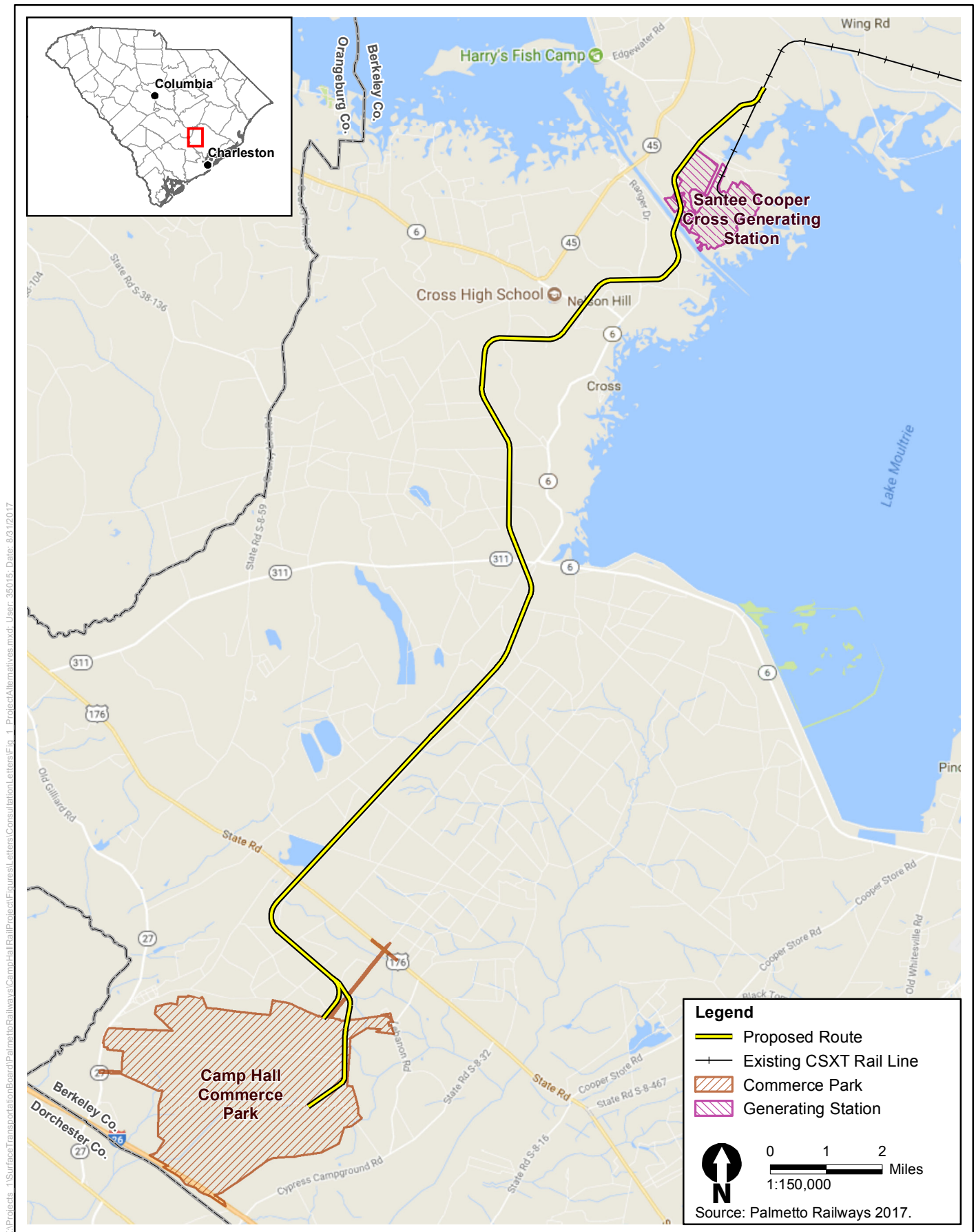
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**



**Figure B**  
**Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map**



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September 8, 2017

Federal Railroad Administration  
John Winkle  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Ste 16T20  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Dear Mr. Winkle:

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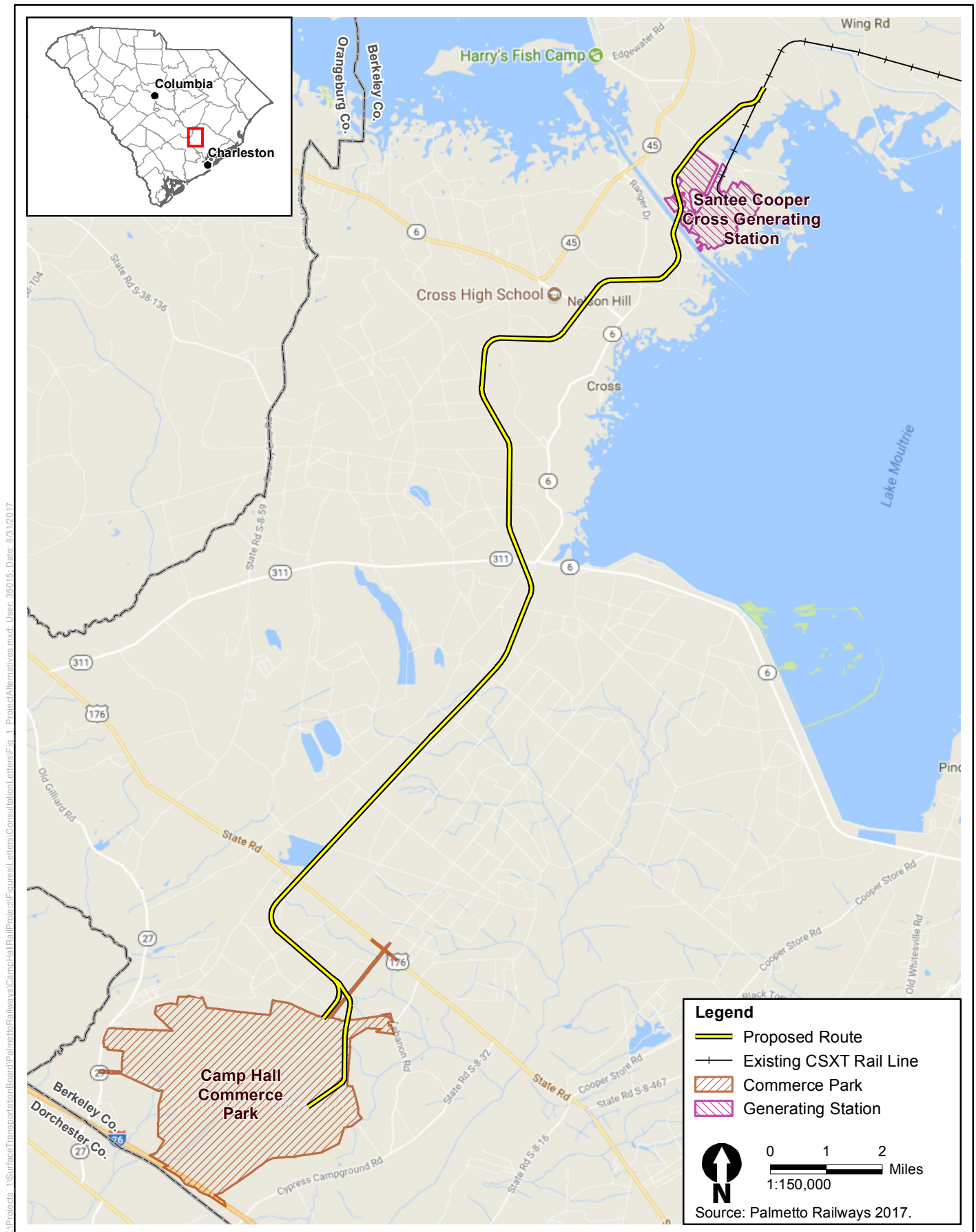
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September 8, 2017

Federal Railroad Administration  
David Velenstein  
Chief, Environment and Systems Planning Division  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

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

Dear Mr. Velenstein:

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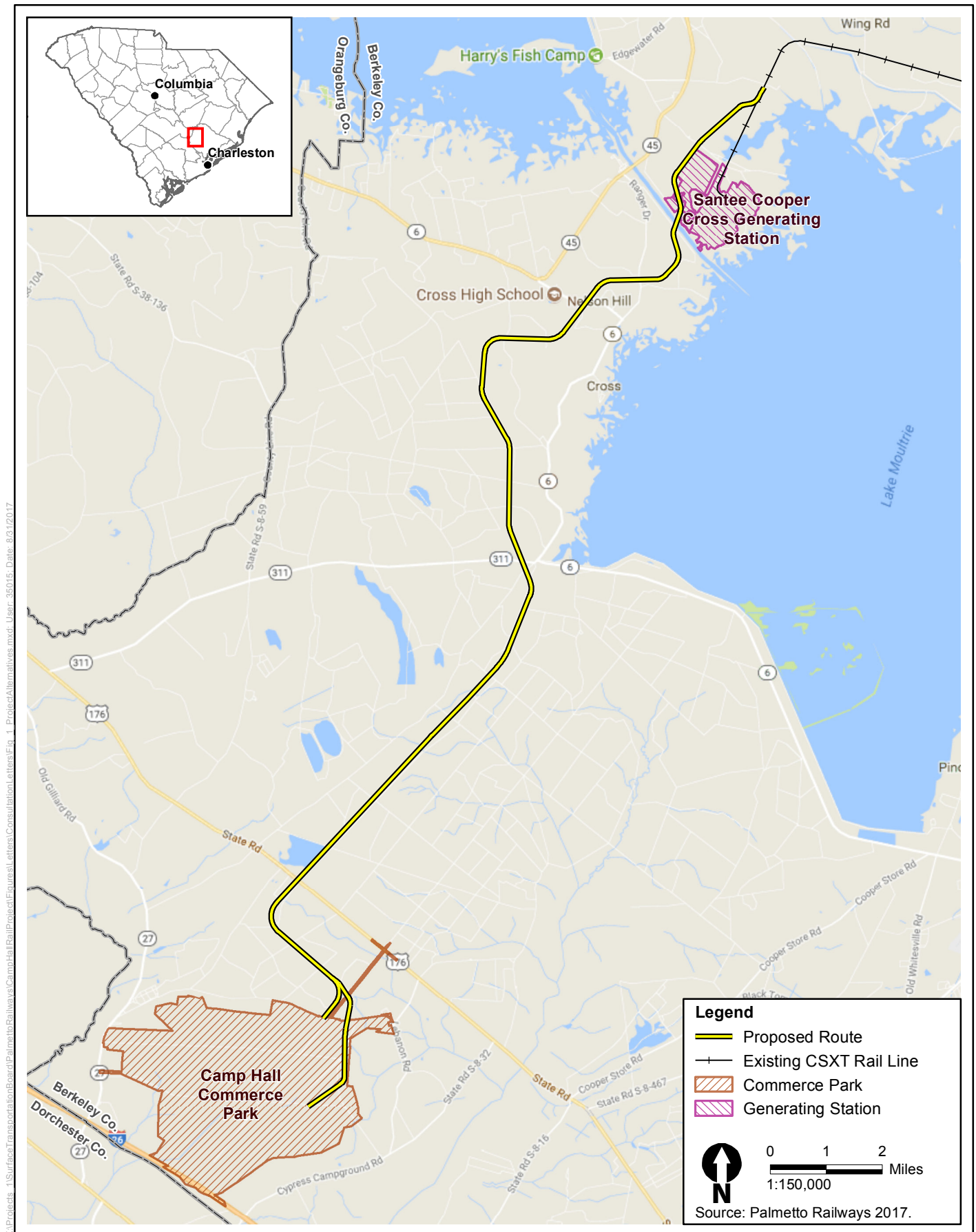
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September 8, 2017

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Services  
Keith Hanson  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
219 Ft. Johnson Rd  
Charleston, SC 29412

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

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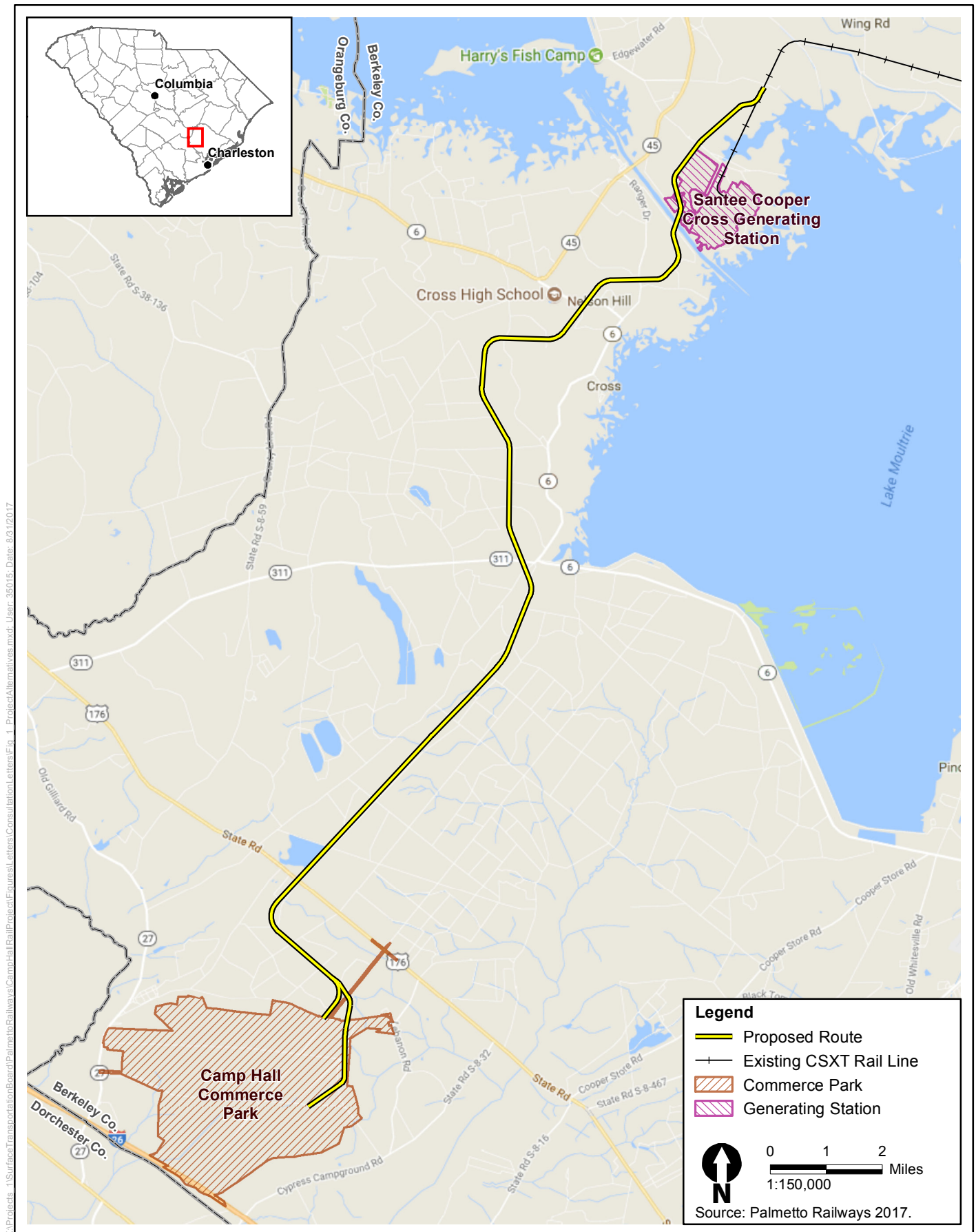
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
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***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Kim Iverson  
Public Information Officer  
4055 Faber Place Dr  
North Charleston, SC 29405

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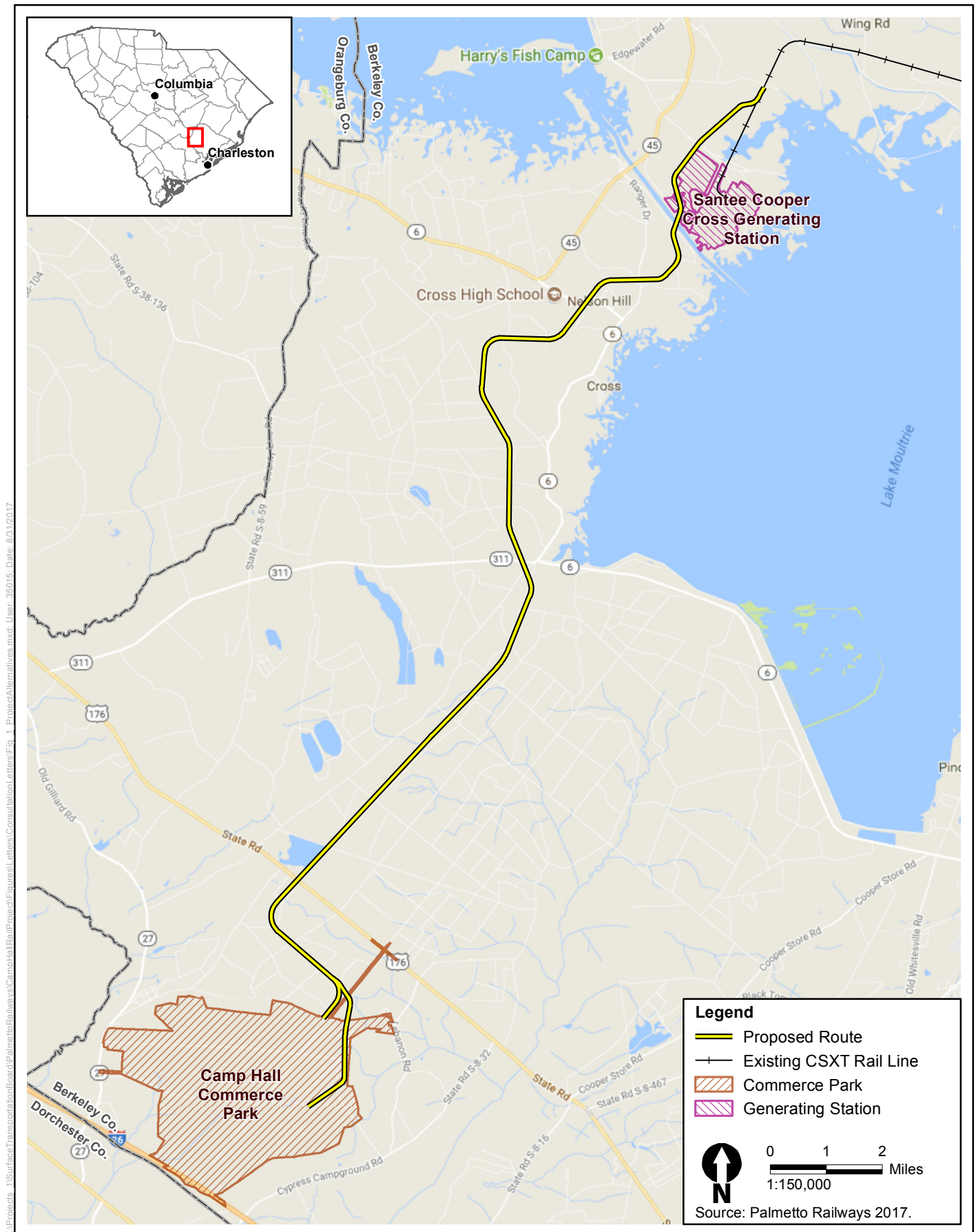
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*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

US Coast Guard  
Barry Dragon  
Chief, Bridge Branch  
909 Se 1St Ave  
#510  
Miami, FL 33131

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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.

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Please send your written comments to Diana Wood, OEA's Project Manager for the environmental analysis, by email at [Diana.Wood@stb.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

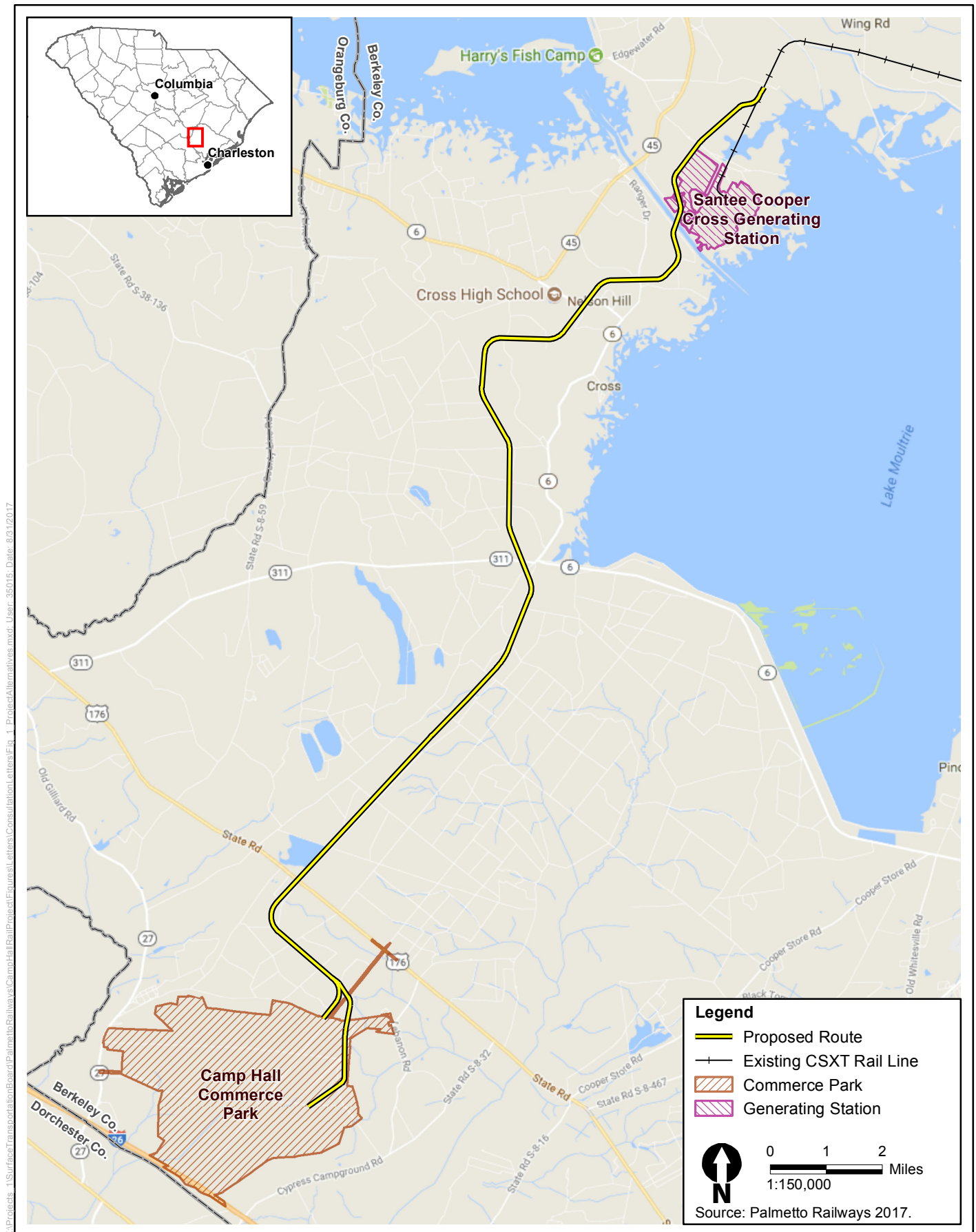
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**





***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

US Environmental Protection Agency  
Kelly Laycock  
South Carolina Regulatory Coordinator  
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Ctr  
61 Forsyth St, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Dear Kelly Laycock:

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, request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, and identify permits and approvals that could be required of the Applicant.

**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 and 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.

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Ms. Diana Wood  
Surface Transportation Board  
Docket No. FD 36095  
c/o ICF  
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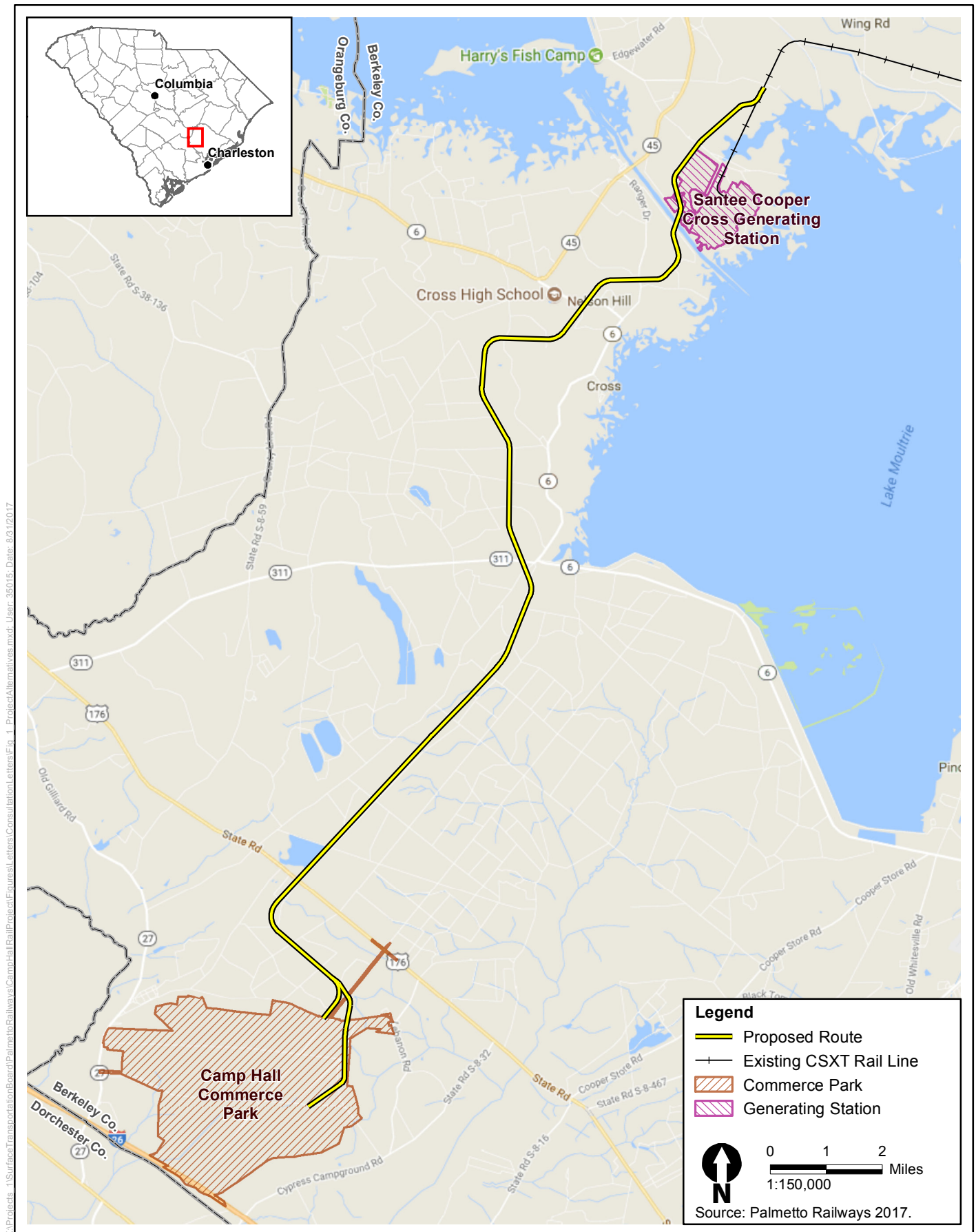
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**





***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

US Environmental Protection Agency  
Christopher Militscher  
Chief  
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Ctr  
61 Forsyth St, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Dear Mr. Militscher:

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.

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**Project Background**

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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](mailto: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](mailto:Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil).

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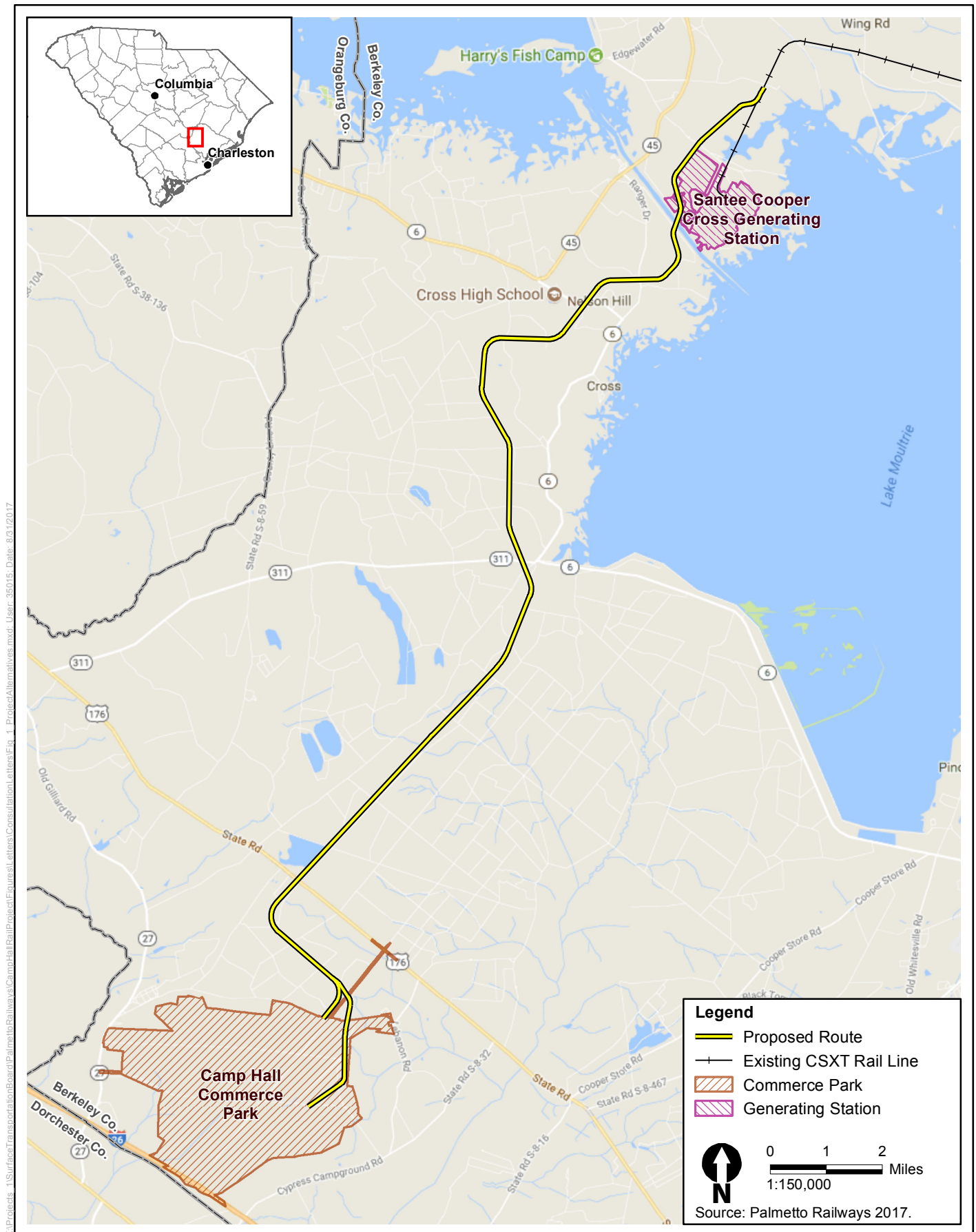
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**





***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

US Fish and Wildlife Services  
Mark Caldwell  
Deputy Field Supervisor  
176 Croghan Spur Rd  
Ste 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

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

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

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, request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, and identify permits and approvals that could be required of the Applicant.

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Ms. Diana Wood  
Surface Transportation Board  
Docket No. FD 36095  
c/o ICF  
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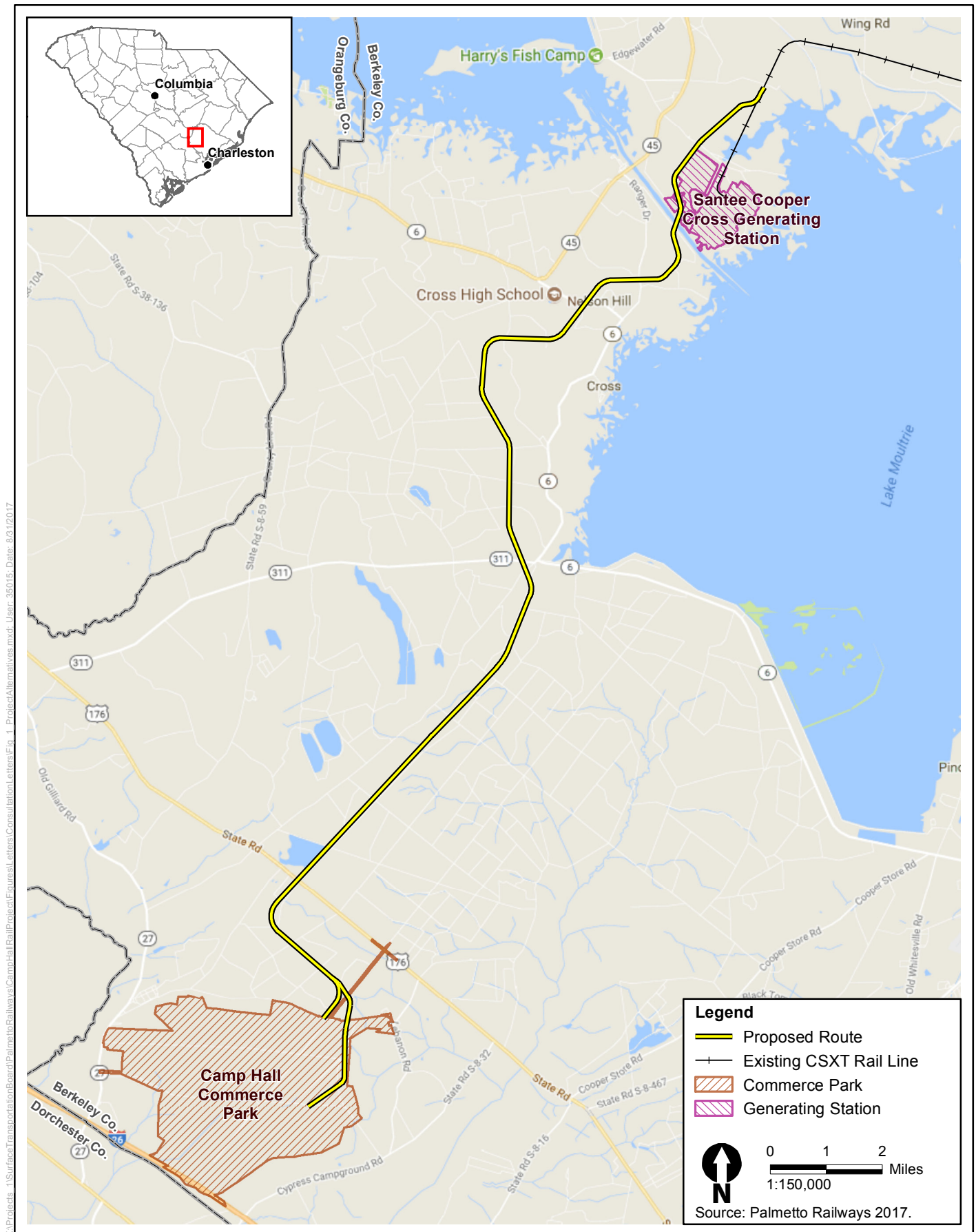
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**





***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

US Housing & Urban Development  
Michael German  
Acting Field Office Director  
1835 Assembly St  
13Th Fl  
Columbia, SC 29201

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

Dear Mr. German:

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.

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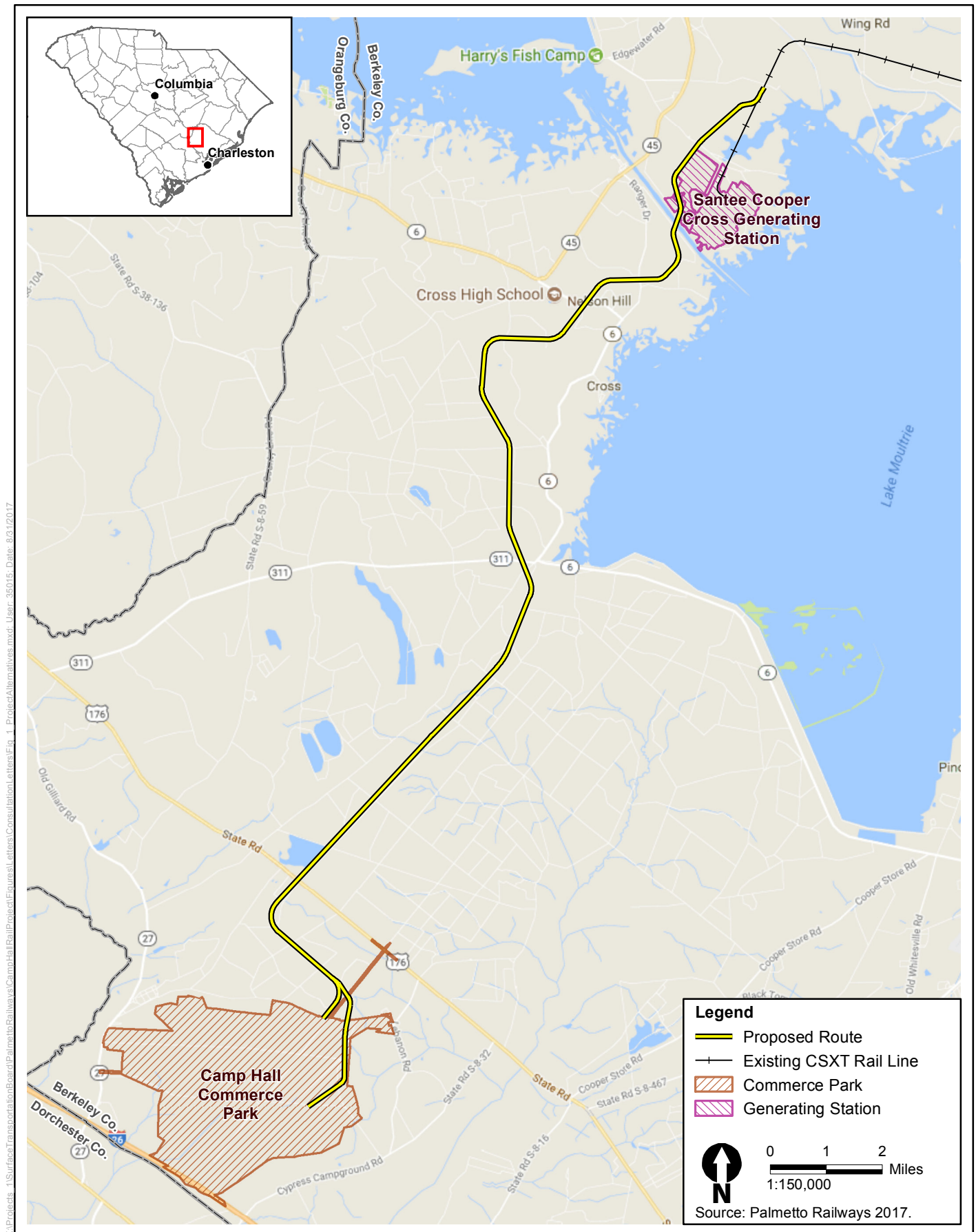
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Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**





***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***  
***Washington, DC 20423***

*Office of Environmental Analysis*

September 8, 2017

USDA NRCS  
Ann English  
State Conservationist  
1835 Assembly St  
Rm 950  
Columbia, SC 29201

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

Dear Ms. English:

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Fairfax, VA 22031

You may also submit comments electronically through the Board's Web site at [www.stb.gov](http://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.

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](mailto: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](mailto:Courtney.M.Stevens@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,

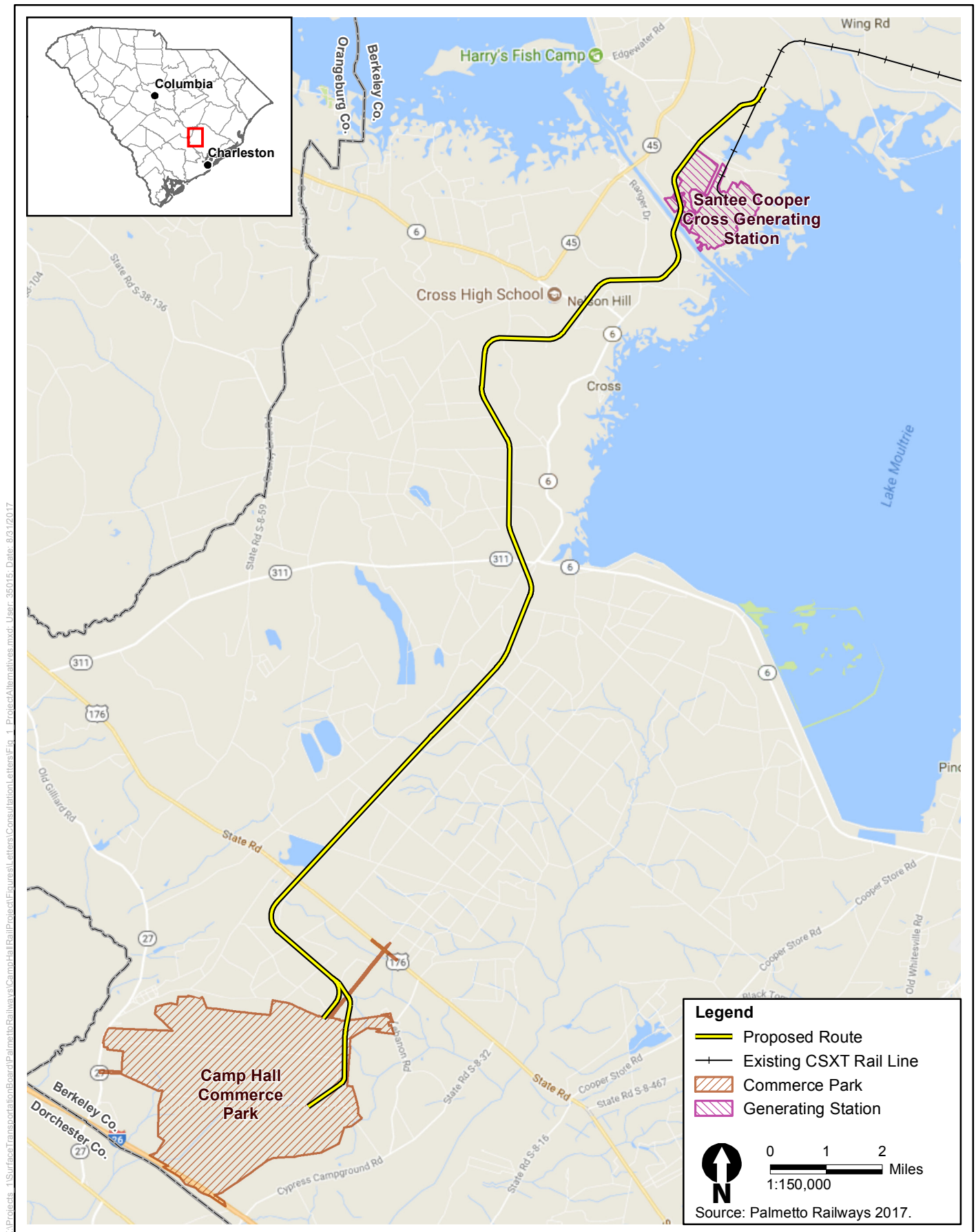
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson  
Director  
Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

Figure A-Proposed Route Map

Figure B-Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map



**Figure A**  
**Palmetto Railways Proposed Route**



**Figure B**  
**Palmetto Railways Alternatives Analysis Map**