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SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 28, 1998

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 564X)

CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC.--ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION--IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, IL

Decided: August 25, 1998

CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F--Exempt Abandonments to abandon 2.9-mile line of its railroad between milepost OOH-445.7 at Okawville and milepost OOH-448.6 at the end of the track at Venedy, in Washington County, IL. Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on July 31, 1998 (63 FR 40949-50). The exemption is scheduled to become effective on August 30, 1998.

The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) served an environmental assessment (EA) in this proceeding on August 7, 1998. In the EA, SEA states that the Marion Illinois Suboffice of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) states that the endangered Indiana bat utilizes trees for roosting and the rearing of its young in the area of the proposed abandonment. USFWS requests a protective condition on any abandonment authority prohibiting tree cutting during a portion of the year in order to avoid impacting this species. Therefore, SEA recommends that a condition be imposed requiring CSXT to avoid conducting salvage activities that involve tree clearing between May 1 and August 31 in order to avoid impacting the endangered Indiana bat. The recommended condition will be imposed.

As conditioned, this decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding is reopened.
2. Upon reconsideration, the exemption of the abandonment of the rail line described above is subject to the condition that CSXT shall avoid conducting salvage activities on the right-of-way between May 1 and August 31.

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3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary