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SERVICE DATE – DECEMBER 22, 2005

DO

FR-4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-297 (Sub-No. 102X)]

Columbus and Greenville Railway Company–Abandonment Exemption–in Leflore  
County, MS

Columbus and Greenville Railway Company (C&G) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F–Exempt Abandonments to abandon a 1.18-mile line of railroad between milepost 112.67 and milepost 113.85, in the City of Greenwood (City), in Leflore County, MS. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 38930.<sup>1</sup>

C&G has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic on the line can be and has been rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic

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<sup>1</sup> C&G indicated in an earlier filing that it would seek abandonment of the above-described rail line. See Columbus and Greenville Railway Company–Acquisition and Operation Exemption–Line of City of Greenwood, MS, STB Finance Docket No. 34666 (STB served Apr. 22, 2005).

reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.–Abandonment–Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on January 21, 2006,<sup>2</sup> unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>3</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>4</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by December 30, 2005. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(2), the railroad must file a verified notice with the Board at least 50 days before the abandonment or discontinuance is to be consummated. In its verified notice, applicant did not indicate a consummation date as required. Based on a subsequent conversation with the applicant's representative, it was confirmed that consummation would not occur before January 21, 2006, 50 days after the December 2, 2005 filing of the verified notice.

<sup>3</sup> The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

<sup>4</sup> Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,200. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

must be filed by January 11, 2006,<sup>5</sup> with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to C&G's representative: H. Lynn Gibson, 201 19th Street North, Columbus, MS 39703.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

C&G has filed environmental and historic reports which address the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by December 27, 2005. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.] Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), C&G shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by C&G's filing of a notice of consummation by December 22, 2006, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

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<sup>5</sup> The City filed a request for issuance of a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905. The Board will address the City's public use request, along with any others that may be filed, in a subsequent decision.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at

“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: December 16, 2005.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary