

Decision ID # 21421 SERVICE DATE - JANUARY 17, 1997

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB- 319 (SUB-NO. 3 X)

FLORIDA CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY, INC.
ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION - IN SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Florida Central Railroad Company, Inc. (FCEN) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a portion its railroad line located between milepost F-1.1 and the end of the track at milepost F-0.9, a distance of 0.2 miles in Seminole County, Florida. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

FCEN states that the short segment of rail line to be abandoned is located between retail establishments and apartment buildings and adjacent to several parking lots. If abandonment is approved, FCEN plans to salvage the tracks and track materials and the right-of-way will be used as part of a parking lot for a new retail facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

FCEN has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and, therefore, no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, the right-of-way will probably not be suitable for other public use since arrangements are in place to convert the right-of-way into a parking lot. However, a request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

Similarly, interim trail use may not be suitable. However, a request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Assistance (OPA) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPA directly at (202) 927-6184, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Assistance, Room 4412, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 2215, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Dana White, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-319 (Sub-No. 3X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Dana White at (202) 927-6213.

Date made available to the public: January 17, 1997.

Comment due date: February 3, 1997. (15 days)

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

Final page showing map.