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SERVICE DATE - JULY 19, 1999

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-531X

PIONEER VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY, INC.—ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION—IN HAMPDEN COUNTY, MA

Decided: July 14, 1999

A decision served on July 23, 1998, authorized Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc. (PVRR), to abandon a 1.9-mile line of railroad known as the Westfield Branch extending from milepost 0.0 to the end of the line at milepost 1.9 in Westfield, Hampden County, MA. The July 23, 1998 decision stated that, if consummation has not been effected by PVRR's filing of a notice of consummation by July 23, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire. Under 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), a railroad may, for good cause shown, file a request for an extension of time to file a notice of consummation in abandonment proceedings.

On June 30, 1999, PVRR filed a request to extend, until January 23, 2000, the time to consummate the abandonment and to file its notice of consummation. PVRR states that it has been actively negotiating to sell the right-of-way to the City of Westfield (City) and anticipates that any agreement involving the sale would be reached by the end of the year. Under the circumstances, PVRR does not want to consummate the abandonment until its negotiations with the City are completed.

PVRR has shown good cause to extend the time to consummate the abandonment and for filing a notice of consummation in this proceeding. Accordingly, the request will be granted.

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. PVRR's request for an extension of time to exercise the abandonment authority is granted.
2. The authority to abandon must be exercised on or before January 23, 2000.

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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