

21706

SERVICE DATE - MARCH 25, 1997
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-33 (SUB-NO. 108X)

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
--ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION--
IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.52 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of the Port Chicago Industrial Lead extending from the end of the line at milepost 37.06 near Clyde to milepost 38.905 near Port Chicago, a distance of 1.845 miles in Contra Costa County, California. 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.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

This line was constructed by The Oakland & Antioch Railway. UP states that there have been no freight shipments on this line for at least the last two years. The rail line is located near Concord Navy Base, and according to UP, the Department of Navy intends to purchase the right-of-way if abandonment is approved.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad 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. Also, we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; California State Historic Preservation Office; and the Contra Costa County Board.

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

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. 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

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 the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. 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 Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Victoria Rutson, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 108X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ms. Rutson at (202) 565-1545.

Date made available to the public: March 21, 1997.

Comment due date: April 7, 1997.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary