

244247

Before the Surface Transportation Board

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August 31, 2017  
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Public Record

BNSF Railway Company - )

Abandonment Exemption - ) AB 6 (Sub.no. 490X)

In King County, WA )

Action Requested by September 6, 2017

|                                                                                    |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | DECISION ID NO.: <u>46029</u>                                 |
|                                                                                    | DECIDED DATE: <u>9/18/17</u>                                  |
|                                                                                    | SERVICE DATE: <u>9/18/17</u>                                  |
|                                                                                    | APPROVED: <u>Rachel D Campbell</u><br>Director                |
| Office of Proceedings                                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Extended to 3/5/18</u> |

Fee waiver per 49 C.F.R. 1002.2(e)(1) (City of Seattle is a local government entity)

Motion for an Extension of NITU Negotiation Period

The City of Seattle ("City") moves for a 180-day extension in the negotiation period provided under the Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) in this proceeding served on September 17, 2015. The NITU negotiation period currently expires on September 6, 2017. The 180-day extension would expire on or about March 5, 2018. This is the fourth extension sought.

City is authorized to state that BNSF Railway ("BNSF"), per its counsel Mr. Morell, consents to this extension. See Ex. A.

Grounds for Extension

As stated in our first extension request, the Burke-Gilman Agreements provide for "railbanking" of the right of way involved in this abandonment proceeding. It is the position of

**FILING FEE WAIVED**

the City of Seattle that BNSF is legally obligated to transfer a 30-foot width of the line involved in this proceeding to the City pursuant to the Burke-Gilman agreements. If the NITU

lapses, the City will contend that BNSF is subject to substantial damages for failure to discharge its obligations under the Burke-Gilman agreements.

BNSF has informed the City that it is discussing a lease for continued rail purposes of a portion of the rail property at

issue in this proceeding to a local industry (Coastal Transportation). The City does not oppose reasonable rail reactivation provided that the Board retains jurisdiction to railbank the property upon termination of the lease, if one is in fact entered. However, the property description for the portion of the property to be transferred to the City for railbanking and interim trail use cannot be determined until BNSF and the local industry complete their negotiations. BNSF today (August 31) advised the City that this process will require another 30 days. Only after that process is completed can railbanking discussions be finalized. Granting an extension of the NITU negotiation period in this situation may serve to facilitate not only preservation of the line for future rail use as well as trail use, but indeed also will sustain an industry interest in immediate rail use of a portion of the line. In all

events, it is necessary and prudent to extend the NITU for an additional 180 days.

It is well established that a NITU extension is appropriate in circumstances such as these:

"An extension of the negotiation period will promote the establishment of trails and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (Trails Act). The purpose of the Trails Act is to preserve rail corridors for possible reactivation of rail service by permitting and encouraging their interim use as recreational trails. See Policy Statement on Rails to Trails Conversions, Ex Part No. 274 (Sub-no. 13B) (ICC served Feb. 5, 1990).

Wisconsin Central Ltd. - Abandonment Exemption - in Brown County, WI, AB 303 (Su-no. 20X), served Oct. 10, 2006. See also Consolidated Rail Corporation - Abandonment Exemption - in St. Joseph County, IN, AB 167 (Sub-no. 1165X), served Feb. 19, 1998.

Because the current NITU negotiation period otherwise ends on September 6, 2017, and BNSF has today (August 31) confirmed that it has not completed discussions with local industry on the portion of the line on which current rail use may be continued, City requests that the Board extend the NITU without lapse in order to alleviate any jurisdictional issues. Although the time is brief, we respectfully request action on or by September 6. As already noted, counsel for BNSF has consented to the relief sought herein.

By my signature below, undersigned counsel for City certifies service upon counsel for BNSF by USPS first class and by email as indicated in the "cc." on 31 August 2017.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated, the NITU negotiation period should be extended for 180 days through and including March 5, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

S/

Charles H. Montange  
Attorney for The City of Seattle  
Law Offices of Charles H. Montange  
426 NW 162d St.  
Seattle, WA 98177  
206-546-1936  
Fax: -3739  
Email: [c.montange@frontier.com](mailto:c.montange@frontier.com)

Att: Appendix (e-mail exchange)

Of counsel: Engel Lee, Esq.  
Seattle City Attorney's Office  
Civil Division - Contracts & Utilities Section  
701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2050  
Seattle, WA 98104-7097  
Phone: 206-727-3979  
Fax: 206-684-8284  
[Engel.Lee@seattle.gov](mailto:Engel.Lee@seattle.gov)

cc. Karl Morell  
Karl Morell & Associates  
655-15<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Suite 225  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(by USPS, first class, and  
Email to [karlm@karlmorell.com](mailto:karlm@karlmorell.com))