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SERVICE DATE – APRIL 28, 2006

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 55X)

SOO LINE RAILROAD COMPANY–ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION–IN MILWAUKEE
COUNTY, WI

Decided: April 27, 2006

By decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) served on February 8, 2005 (February 2005 decision), the Board, under 49 U.S.C. 10502, exempted from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 the abandonment by the Soo Line Railroad Company (Soo Line) of a 5-mile line of railroad known as the West Allis Line, extending from milepost 88.2 +/- (near the State Highway 41 crossing in Milwaukee) to milepost 93.2 +/- (near North 123rd Street in Wauwatosa), in Milwaukee County, WI, subject to trail use, environmental and standard employee protective conditions. The February 2005 decision authorized the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), to negotiate with Soo Line for interim trail use/rail banking for the 5-mile line under the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (Trails Act). At the request of WisDOT, the negotiating period under the NITU was extended to May 4, 2006, by decisions served on September 2, 2005, October 28, 2005, and February 2, 2006.

On April 21, 2006, WisDOT, on behalf of WisDNR, filed a request for an additional 90-day extension of the NITU negotiating period. WisDOT states that negotiations are continuing between the parties but more time is needed to finalize negotiations. On April 24, 2006, Soo Line filed its response, stating that it agrees to the extension request to complete negotiations.

Where, as here, the carrier is willing to continue trail use negotiations, the negotiating period may be extended. An extension of the negotiating period will promote the establishment of trails and rail banking consistent with the Trails Act.¹ Accordingly, the NITU negotiating period will be extended for 90 days from May 4, 2006.

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

¹ See Rail Abandonments–Supplemental Trails Act Procedures, 4 I.C.C.2d 152, 157-58 (1987).

It is ordered:

1. The request to extend the NITU negotiating period is granted.
2. The NITU negotiating period is extended to August 2, 2006.
3. This decision is effective on its date of service.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary