

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
441 S. Salina Street, Suite 354  
Syracuse, NY 13202-2450

August 1, 2012

Ms. Jo Ann Burroughs  
CSX Manager Network Services  
500 Water Street J 315  
Jacksonville, FL, 32202

Re: Information Request  
Proposed Abandonment  
STB-Docket No. AB-55 (Sub No. 716X)

Dear Ms. Burroughs:

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has completed a review of the Environmental Report for the proposed abandonment of the CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), rail line between railroad mile post QDN 28.0 and milepost QDN28.1 in Niagara Falls, New York. The enclosed Environmental Response Form and NRCS Farmland Classification Figure provide documentation that the affected land contiguous to the CSXT rail line in the project area is not classified as prime agricultural land. On the basis of this finding, it is unlikely that project activities will have an adverse impact upon prime farmland in the vicinity of the project site.

For your future evaluations of CSXT activities in abandoning, converting, or constructing rail infrastructure, including potential new routing and maintenance facility impacts to sensitive environmental areas, we recommend that you review three Geographic Information System (GIS) data sites; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Geospatial Data Gateway, <http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>, the New York State GIS Clearinghouse, <http://gis.ny.gov/>, and for digital soils, the Soil Data Mart, <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>. These resources will aid your identification of soil properties and determinations of agricultural land use classifications (including Prime or Unique Farmland Classification) within the potential disturbance areas of your projects.

Thank you for contacting us with your concerns for protecting NYS's agricultural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Henry", is written over the typed name.

Edward Henry,  
State Resource Conservationist

Cc: Charles Kesterson, District Conservationist, NRCS, Lockport, NY

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500 Water Street – J-315  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Phone: (904) 359-1247  
FAX: (904) 359-1373  
E-Mail: Jo\_Burroughs@csx.com

Jo Ann Burroughs  
Manager Network Services

### CSXT Environmental Report Response Form

RE: STB Docket Number AB 55 (Sub No. 716X)

Please be advised that on or about August 1, 2012, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) is proposing to file with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon a portion of its rail line between railroad milepost QDN 28.0 near North Avenue to the end of track at railroad milepost QDN 28.1 on CSXT's Northern Region, Albany Division, Niagara Subdivision, Niagara County, Niagara Falls, New York.

Agency response (check one):

☒ No Environmental Impact - to prime agricultural lands (see attached)

☐ Environmental Impact as follows (or attached):

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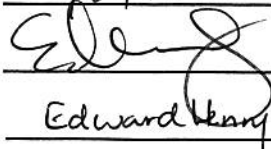
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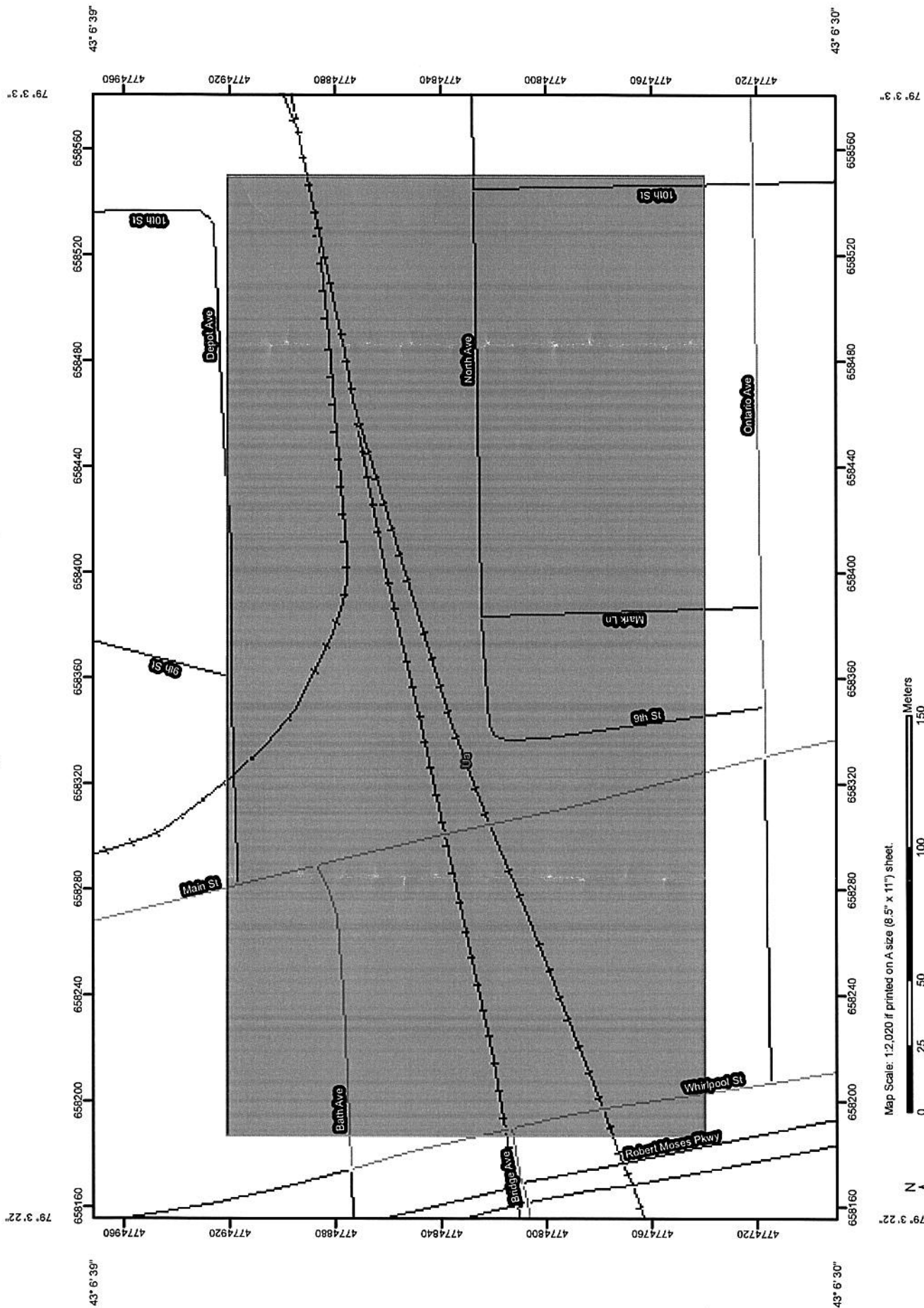
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Date: 7/31/12  
Signature:   
Name: Edward Henry  
Title: State Resource Conservationist

Farmland Classification—Niagara County Area, New York  
(CSX Abandonment Area QDN 28.0)



## MAP LEGEND

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Area of Interest (AOI)                                                                                             |  | Prime farmland if subsoiled, completely removing the root inhibiting soil layer                             |
|  | Area of Interest (AOI)                                                                                             |  | Prime farmland if irrigated and the product of I (soil erodibility) x C (climate factor) does not exceed 60 |
|  | Soils                                                                                                              |  | Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium                                        |
|  | Soil Map Units                                                                                                     |  | Farmland of statewide importance                                                                            |
|  | Soil Ratings                                                                                                       |  | Farmland of local importance                                                                                |
|  | Not prime farmland                                                                                                 |  | Farmland of unique importance                                                                               |
|  | All areas are prime farmland                                                                                       |  | Not rated or not available                                                                                  |
|  | Prime farmland if drained                                                                                          |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season                      |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated                                                                                        |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season   |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and drained                                                                            |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and drained                                                                            |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and drained                                                                            |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and drained                                                                            |  |                                                                                                             |
|  | Prime farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season |  |                                                                                                             |

### Water Features

Streams and Canals

### Transportation

 Rails  
 Interstate Highways  
 US Routes  
 Major Roads  
 Local Roads

## MAP INFORMATION

Map Scale: 1:2,020 if printed on A size (8.5" x 11") sheet.  
The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:15,840.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for accurate map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Web Soil Survey URL: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>  
Coordinate System: UTM Zone 17N NAD83

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Niagara County Area, New York  
Survey Area Data: Version 10, Dec 1, 2011

## Farmland Classification

| Farmland Classification— Summary by Map Unit — Niagara County Area, New York (NY664) |                 |                    |              |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Map unit symbol                                                                      | Map unit name   | Rating             | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI |
| Ua                                                                                   | Unsurveyed area | Not prime farmland | 16.2         | 100.0%         |
| Totals for Area of Interest                                                          |                 |                    | 16.2         | 100.0%         |

## Description

Farmland classification identifies map units as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance, or unique farmland. It identifies the location and extent of the soils that are best suited to food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. NRCS policy and procedures on prime and unique farmlands are published in the "Federal Register," Vol. 43, No. 21, January 31, 1978.

## Rating Options

*Aggregation Method:* No Aggregation Necessary

*Tie-break Rule:* Lower