



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Tennessee ES Office
446 Neal Street
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501



March 17, 2020

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
Washington, D.C.

Subject: FWS# 2020-I-0755. Surface Transportation Board – Ken Tenn Regional Rail Partners, Inc., Construction and Operation Exemption in Obion County, Tennessee and Fulton County, Kentucky.

Dear Ms. Rutson:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) personnel have reviewed your correspondence dated February 28, 2019, regarding the Ken Tenn Regional Rail Partners, Inc. (Applicant), proposal to construct and operate a rail line in Obion County, Tennessee and Fulton County, Kentucky. Your correspondence states that the applicant intends to construct and operate approximately 11.4 miles of common carrier line. Approximately 1.32 miles of the route would be built over existing but abandoned former right-of-way. The remaining segments would be constructed over new right-of-way, north and south of the abandoned segment. Once operational, the applicant anticipates that rail traffic would consist of one (1) daily roundtrip and that commodities would include agricultural and industrial materials and products. In response to your request for comments, the Service is commenting under authorities of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended. The following serves as a joint response from the Service's Tennessee Field Office and the Kentucky Field Office.

Since we are not fully aware of all action components, the Service recommends that the action agency obtain a species list from the Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>) website. Once obtained, the list will identify all federally threatened or endangered species and designated critical habitat that may be present within the action area and allow the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to fully evaluate the proposed action. In accordance with section 7 of the ESA, the STB is required to determine whether the action may affect federally threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat. If it is determined that the action may affect these resources, the STB would be required to consult with the Service.

The Service appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed action. If further consultation with the Service is warranted, please feel free to contact Dustin Boles at 931/525-4984, or by email at dustin_boles@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Virgil Lee Andrews, Jr.
Field Supervisor