

1 Thompson Square  
Suite 201  
Charlestown, MA 02129  
www.jehowardlaw.com

HEI-18052  
DAW  
AB 1043 1X  
tel 617.886.9322  
fax 617.886.9324  
cell 617.905.6083  
jim@jehowardlaw.com

September 18, 2009

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Room 1106  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Abandonment in Penobscot and Aroostook Counties, Maine

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I represent Montréal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. ("MMA"), a class II rail carrier that operates in Maine, Vermont, New Brunswick and Québec. MMA intends to file an abandonment application for certain lines, described more fully below, and requests, in connection with such application, approval for the retention of a third-party consultant and adoption of an alternative environmental review process, all as more fully set forth below.

On August 28, 2009, MMA filed a system diagram map listing 5 line segments in category 1. MMA intends to file an abandonment application for such line segments, which are described more fully as follows:

1. The Madawaska Subdivision, located in Penobscot and Aroostook Counties, between milepost 109 near Millinocket and milepost 260 near Madawaska;
2. The Presque Isle Subdivision, located in Aroostook County, between milepost 0.0 near Squa Pan and milepost 25.30 near Presque Isle;
3. The Fort Fairfield Subdivision, located in Aroostook County, between milepost 0.0 in Presque Isle and milepost 10.0 near Easton;
4. The Limestone Subdivision, located in Aroostook County, between milepost 0.0 near Presque Isle and milepost 29.85 near Limestone; and

5. The Houlton Subdivision, located in Aroostook County, between milepost 0.0 near Oakfield and milepost 16.9 near Houlton.

In accordance with 49 CFR 1105.10(d), MMA requests approval from SEA to retain a third-party consultant to assist it in the preparation of the necessary environmental documentation. Specifically, MMA proposes to retain HNTB Corp. for this purpose. Ron Deverman of HNTB will be the principal professional in charge of the effort to prepare the environmental documents. HNTB and Mr. Deverman, in particular, have extensive experience in dealing with your office and in the preparation of environmental materials in connection with rail transactions generally and abandonments in particular. MMA believes that HNTB is eminently qualified and should be approved as a third-party consultant. MMA understands that if the retention of HNTB is approved, HNTB would work under the direction of SEA but would be compensated by MMA.

As provided in 49 CFR 1105.10(d), the environmental reporting requirements that would otherwise apply will be waived if the applicant hires a third-party consultant and SEA approves the scope of the consultant's work. MMA hereby requests such a waiver of the reporting requirements that would otherwise apply, including specifically the requirements of 49 CFR 1105.7 and 1105.8 for the filing of an environmental report and a historic report. In lieu of such reports, MMA proposes to submit, with the direction and assistance of HNTB, a preliminary draft Environmental Assessment incorporating the substance of the information required by 49 CFR 1105.7 and 1105.8.

MMA also requests that you determine that an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of environmental documentation for the proposed abandonment. An Environmental Assessment is consistent with the Board's regulations at 49 CFR 1105.6(b)(2), which provides that Environmental Assessments, rather than Environmental Impact Statements, will generally be used for abandonment proceedings. MMA is aware of no extraordinary fact or circumstance that would indicate that an Environmental Impact Statement would be necessary or appropriate in this case.

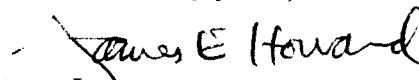
MMA suggests the following schedule and procedure be followed for purposes of the Environmental Assessment:

1. MMA, through HNTB, will submit a preliminary draft Environmental Assessment as promptly as practicable, and SEA will provide any preliminary reactions or suggestions within 10 days thereafter.
2. MMA, through HNTB, will submit, approximately 7 days prior to filing the abandonment application, a revised draft Environmental Assessment, taking into account any reactions or suggestions from SEA and others with whom consultation is appropriate.
3. SEA will, assisted by HNTB as a third-party consultant, review and verify the information in the draft Environmental Assessment, discuss any questions or issues with MMA and HNTB and issue and make available for public review and comment an

Environmental Assessment within 30 days after the filing of the abandonment application.

In summary, MMA respectfully requests that you approve HNTB as a third-party consultant, waive the requirement of environmental and historic reports, determine that an Environmental Assessment is appropriate, rather than an Environmental Impact Statement, and adopt the procedure and schedule outlined above. If you have questions, need additional information or wish to discuss any of MMA's requests, please contact the undersigned or feel free to contact Mr. Deverman directly (312-798-0221). We will be available at your convenience to discuss any of these matters. Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

  
James E. Howard

cc: Ron Deverman