



ET-16150

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Highways

1900 Kanawha Boulevard East • Building Five • Room 110
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430 • 304/558-3505

Joe Manchin III
Governor

September 18, 2008

FD 35131

Ms. Jo Carole Dawkins
Dawkins Environmental Consulting
Post Office Box 845
Springville, Alabama 35146

Dear Ms. Dawkins:

By letter, dated August 22, 2008, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) requested comments regarding the proposed construction by Vaughan Railroad Company of approximately five miles of new rail line in Monongalia County, West Virginia.

Based on the results of a review by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) of the preliminary information concerning the rail line, we feel certain issues should be addressed during the preparation of the environmental document for the proposed project. The illustration provided regarding both proposed routes (A and B) of the rail line, and the "loops" at the western end of each line, depicts several locations where the rail line would cross highways that are under the jurisdiction of the WVDOT. If at all possible, grade separation should be implemented to avoid at-grade highway/rail crossings. The Division of Highways (DOH) would consider allowing the company to relocate DOH highways to avoid rail crossings, if such relocation could be accomplished with acceptable horizontal and vertical roadway alignments.

While we understand that only preliminary information regarding the proposal may be available at this time, the WVDOT will need to receive certain information before we will be able to provide approval to perform work affecting our State Highway System and/or any other WVDOT facilities, if the proposal is to be implemented. Such information would include the length of trains anticipated, track speeds, highway modifications, crossing improvements, signalization, and other information, as well as all design plans and calculations. The company's trains cannot block any public highway/rail crossing for more than 10 minutes. The WVDOT recommends that the Public Service Commission of West Virginia be provided the opportunity to review the company's proposal also.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding this matter. Should additional information be needed, please feel free to contact Mr. David E. Cramer, P.E., with our Commissioner's Office of Economic Development, at (304) 558-3505.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul A. Mattox, Jr.".

Paul A. Mattox, Jr., P. E.
Secretary of Transportation/
Commissioner of Highways

PAM:Cc

cc: Ms. Cindy Butler, Director, West Virginia State Rail Authority