

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340

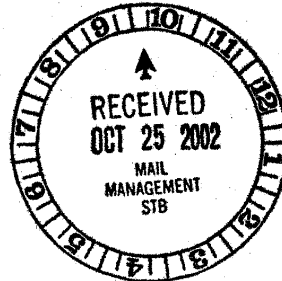
Telephone (805) 922-7941

FAX (805) 922-9554

206488

October 24, 2002

DID# 0102058001



VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

The Honorable Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Service Transportation Board
Mercury Building
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-844 ~~X~~ Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Secretary Williams:

Enclosed for filing are the original and ten (10) copies of Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company's Notice of Exemption in the above-captioned proceeding. A check in the amount of \$2,700.00 to cover the filing fee is also enclosed. I would appreciate your acknowledgement of receipt of these documents by time and date stamping the extra enclosed copy of this letter and returning it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Very truly yours,

R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE
OF

HILL, FARRER & BURRILL LLP
Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

FILED

OCT 25 2002

SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BOARD

RCB:ajd
Enclosures

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

OCT 25 2002

Part of
Public Record

FEE RECEIVED

OCT 25 2002

SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

DOCKET NO. AB-844

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

--ABANDONMENT--

BETWEEN College Drive (Milepost 9.75)

AND Gates Station (Milepost 14.62)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

COMES NOW Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRR") and files this notice of exemption from regulation under 49 U.S.C. §§ 10903-10905, pursuant to the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 10502 and 49 CFR § 1152.50, for abandonment of a portion of its line of railroad lying between Milepost 9.75 and Milepost 14.62.

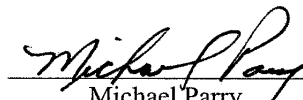
Pursuant to regulations adopted by the Interstate Commerce Commission in Ex Parte No. 274 (Sub-Nos. 8 and 8A), Exemption of Out of Service Rail Lines, 366 I.C.C. 885 (1983) and 1 I.C.C. 2d 55 (1984), and by the Surface Transportation Board ("Board" or "STB") in STB Ex Parte No. 537, Abandonment and Discontinuance of Rail Lines and Rail Transportation Under 49 U.S.C. 10903, served December 24, 1996, and codified at 49 CFR § 1152.50, SMVRR states as follows:

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION THAT RAIL LINE MEETS
CRITERIA of 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(b)

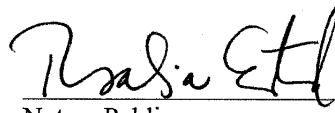
STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA)

I, Michael Parry, being duly sworn, depose and state that I am the President of Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRR"), that I am authorized to make this verification, and that I have read the foregoing Notice of Exemption and have knowledge of the matters set forth therein; and that all such statements made and matters set forth are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

I hereby certify that the 4.87 mile line segment between Milepost 9.75 and Milepost 14.62, in the City of Santa Maria, County of Santa Barbara, California, over which operations are to be abandoned, is subject to my supervision and direction; that no local traffic has moved over the line for at least two years prior to the date hereof; that no overhead traffic has moved over the line for at least two years prior to the date hereof and that overhead traffic, if there were any, could be rerouted over other lines. Further, no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line or a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending before the Surface Transportation Board or any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of the complainant within the two-year period. The foregoing certification is made on behalf of SMVRR by the undersigned after due and careful investigation of the matters herein certified and based on the best of the knowledge, information, and belief of the undersigned.


Michael Parry

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22nd day of October, 2002.


Notary Public

My Commission Expires: Jan 21, 2006

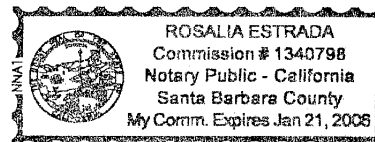
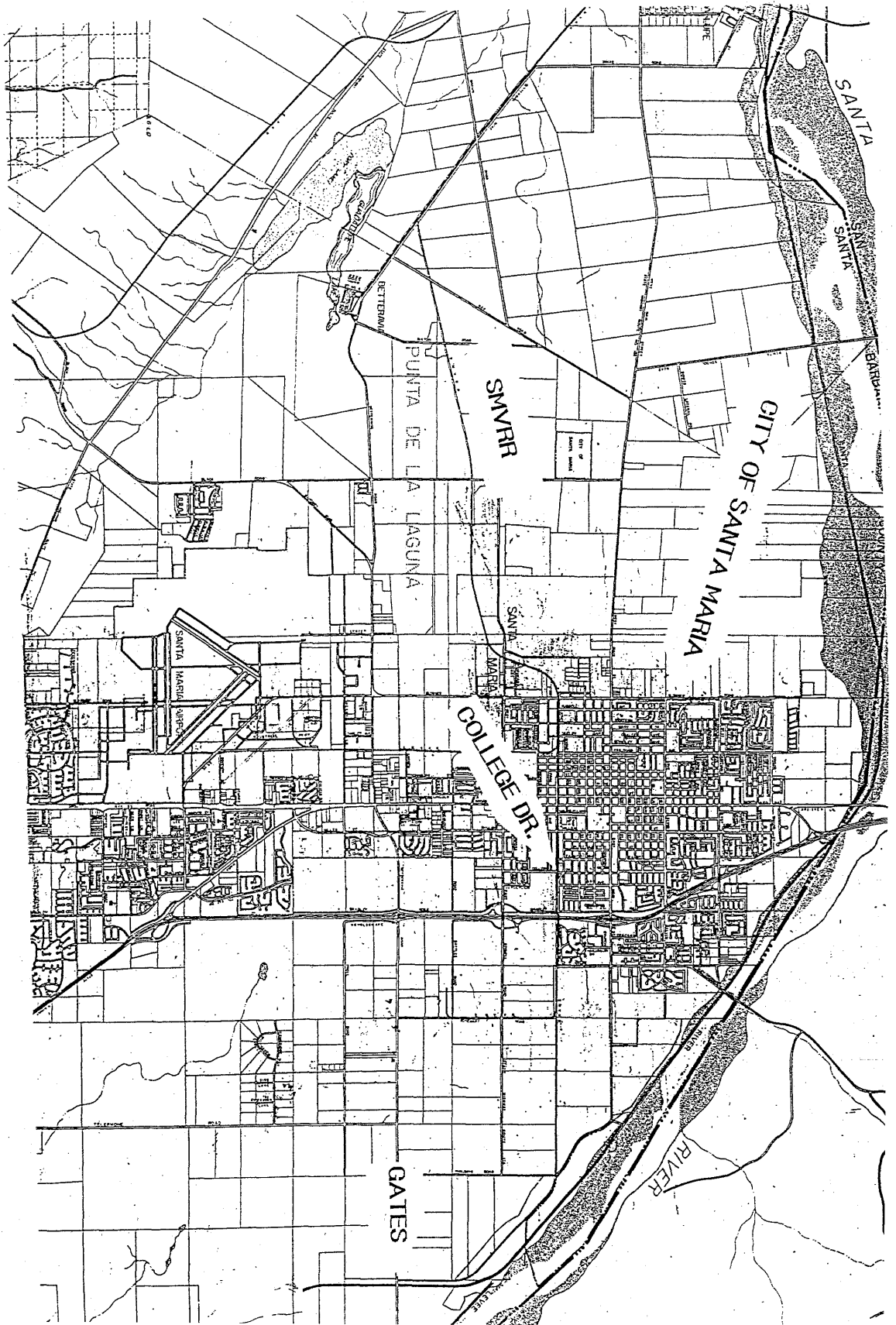


EXHIBIT B



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EXHIBIT C

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(d)(1), the undersigned hereby certifies that notice of the proposed abandonment in Docket No. AB-844 was mailed via Federal Express on October 1, 2002, to the following parties:

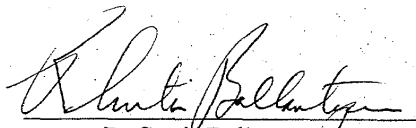
Mr. Wesley M. Franklin
Executive Director
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

U.S. Department of Defense
Military Traffic Management Command
Transportation Engineering Agency
Railroads for National Defense Program
720 Thimble Shoals Blvd., Suite 130
Newport News, VA 23606-2574

Mr. Tom Ross
Chief of National Recreation and Trails
U.S. Department of Interior - National Park Service
Recreation Resources Assistance Division
1849 C Street, NW, MS3622
Washington, DC 20240

Mr. Dale Bosworth
Chief of the Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Sydney R. Yates Federal Building
201 14th Street, SW at Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20024

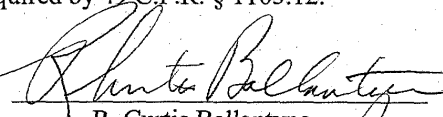
Dated: October 24, 2002


R. Curtis Ballantyne

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

The undersigned hereby certifies that notice of the proposed abandonment in Docket No. AB-844 was advertised on October 18, 2002, in the Santa Maria Times, a newspaper of general circulation in Santa Maria, California, as required by 49 C.F.R. § 1105.12.

Dated: October 24, 2002.


R. Curtis Ballantyne

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2002 / SANTA MARIA TIMES • D5

**NOTICE FOR PUBLIC
HEARING
ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION
NOTICE OF INTENT
TO ABANDON RAIL
SERVICE**

Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company gives notice that on or about October 28, 2002, it intends to file with the Surface Transportation Board (Board), Washington, DC 20423, a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F - Exempt Abandonments permitting the abandonment of a 4.87-mile line of railroad between railroad milepost 9.75, near College Drive, and railroad milepost 14.82 near Gates Station, which traverses through United States Postal Service Zip Code 93454 in Santa Barbara County, California. The proceeding will be docketed as No. AB-844.

The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will generally prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), which will normally be available 25 days after the filing of the notice of exemption. Comments on environmental and energy matters should be filed no later than 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public and will be addressed in a Board decision. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA or make inquiries regarding environmental matters by writing to the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), Surface Transportation Board, Washington DC 20423 or by calling that office at 202-927-6211.

Appropriate offers of financial assistance to continue rail service can be filed with the Board. Requests for environmental conditions, public use conditions, or rail banking/trails use also can be filed with the Board. An original and 10 copies of any pleading that raises matters other than environmental issues (such as trails use, public use, and offers of financial assistance) must be filed directly with the Board's Office of the Secretary, 1225 K Street, NW,

Public Notice

Washington, DC 20423 (See 49 CFR 1104.1(a) and 1104.3(e)), and one copy must be served on applicant's representative (See 49 CFR 1104.12(a)). Questions regarding offers of financial assistance, public use or trails use may be directed to the Board's office of Congressional and Public Services at 202-565-1592. Copies of any comments or requests for conditions should be served on the applicant's representative: R. Curtis Ballantyne of Hill, Farrer & Burnil LLP, One California Plaza, 37th Floor, 300 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90071, telephone no. 213-621-0814. Legal No. 131402 Pub. 10/17, 2002

**ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

Pursuant to 49 CFR § 1105.11, the undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the Environmental Report in Docket No. AB-844 was mailed via Federal Express on September 24, 2002 to the following agencies identified in 49 CFR § 1105.7(b):

State Clearing House Director
Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

The Honorable Joseph Centeno, Mayor
City of Santa Maria
110 East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454-5190

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 1
Eastside Federal Complex
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District
333 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

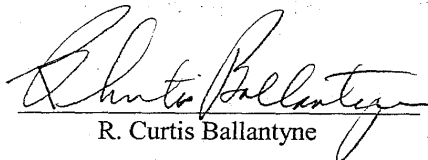
National Park Service
Pacific West Region
One Jackson Center
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service
Western Region Office
430 "G" Street, Suite 4165
Davis, CA 95616

Mr. Edward J. McKay
Chief, Spatial Reference System Division
DOC/NOAA
National Geodetic Survey N/CGS
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Springs, MD 20910-3282

Mr. Wesley M. Franklin
Executive Director
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

Dated: October 24, 2002.

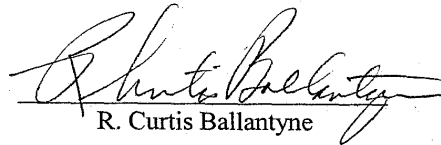

R. Curtis Ballantyne

HISTORIC REPORT
CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to the requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c), the undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the Historic Report in Docket No. AB-844 was mailed via Federal Express on September 24, 2002, to the following agency:

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Office of Historic Preservation
1416 9th Street, Room 1442-7
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dated: October 24, 2002.



R. Curtis Ballantyne

EXHIBIT D

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY
Abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line between
Milepost 9.97 and Milepost 14.62
College Drive to Gates Station, Santa Maria, California

Docket No. AB-844

ENVIRONMENTAL AND

HISTORIC REPORTS

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ON PROPOSED RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT

Abandonment of: 4.87 miles of track between MP 9.75 and MP 14.62 from College Drive to Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

1. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company (hereinafter called SMVRR) proposes to abandon use of 4.87 miles of rail line from Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California. A Map delineating the line proposed for abandonment is attached as Exhibit "A". The alternatives to abandonment of this line are not to abandon or to discontinue service on the line and retain the trackage in place. Not abandoning the line would avoid the temporary impacts from salvage and recycling of the rails and cross-ties, but eliminate the long-term environmental and social benefits.

2. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Effects of the proposed action on regional or local transportation systems and patterns are expected to be negligible. Within the last four years, no rail freight or passenger traffic has moved on the line segment proposed for abandonment. Consequently, no rail traffic will be diverted to highway mode as a result of the abandonment.

3. LAND USE

(i) The proposed abandonment involves 4.87 miles of rail line from College Drive to Gates Station, Santa Maria, California. The land use along the rail line proposed for abandonment of service is approximately 5% residential, and 95% agricultural. SMVRR owns the right-of-way (ROW) that it will sell to the adjacent owners, with local zoning and

development ordinances controlling future land use. With respect to effects of the proposed rail line abandonment on land use, SMVRR believes any impact will be negligible. The absence of traffic on the rail line proposed for abandonment indicates a substantial lack of rail dependent land uses in the service area. Since no rail traffic moves on the line over which service is to be abandoned, the abandonment is not expected to have any effect on existing land use, future land use, land use plans or the land use planning process. Therefore the proposed abandonment is expected to be consistent with any land use plans for the service area.

(ii) Prime Agricultural Lands

No effects on any prime agricultural land are anticipated as a result of the abandonment.

(iii) Coastal Zone

Not Applicable

(iv) Alternative Public Use

Location, physical condition, and adjacent conditions, leads SMVRR to believe the ROW of the line proposed for abandonment would not be suitable for highways, other forms of mass transit, energy production related transportation facilities, conservation or recreation corridors, or other public use.

4. ENERGY

(i) Development and Transportation of Energy Resources

Development and transportation of energy resources will not be affected by the abandonment. No freight or passenger traffic has moved on the line proposed for abandonment for over four years, and therefore compared with the past four years the abandonment would have no effect on development and transportation of energy resources.

(ii) Movement/Recovery of Recyclable Commodities

Movement/recovery of recyclable commodities will not be affected by the abandonment.

No freight or passenger traffic has moved on the line proposed for abandonment for over four years, and therefore compared with the past four years the abandonment would have no effect on movement or recovery of recyclable commodities.

(iii) Impact on Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency will not be impacted by the proposed abandonment. No freight or passenger traffic has moved on the line proposed for abandonment for over four years, and therefore, compared with the past four years, the abandonment would have no effect on energy efficiency.

(iv) Diversion of Traffic to Motor Carriers

No traffic is expected to be diverted to motor carriers in connection with the proposed abandonment.

5. AIR

The proposed action is abandonment and does not exceed Surface Transportation Board thresholds at 49 CFR 1105.7 (e)(5) and therefore does not require a quantified analysis of emissions.

(i) Effects on Air Emissions

SMVRR does not anticipate any adverse effect on California's air quality as a result of the proposed abandonment.

(ii) Class I or Non-Attainment Area

SMVRR does not believe any Class I or Non-Attainment areas would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

(iii) Ozone Depleting Materials

Not applicable. Transportation of ozone depleting materials (such as nitrogen oxide and freon) is not contemplated, since the proposed action is abandonment.

6. NOISE

The proposed action does not exceed Surface Transportation Board thresholds at 49 CFR 1105.7 (e)(6) and therefore does not require a quantified analysis of noise levels. Noise levels associated with rail removal or salvage operations will be temporary and will not have a significant impact on the area surrounding the proposed abandonment.

7. SAFETY

(i) Public Health and Safety

Abandonment of the captioned rail line will have no significant effect upon public health or safety. At the existing grade crossings on the line to be abandoned, the potential for accidents and delays will be eliminated.

(ii) Hazardous Materials Transport

Not applicable. Action proposed is abandonment.

(iii) Hazardous Waste or Hazmat Spill Sites

SMVRR has no knowledge of any hazardous waste sites or sites where there have been known hazardous material spills on the ROW of the line proposed for abandonment or which will be affected by this abandonment.

8. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

(i) Endangered Species/Critical Habitat

SMVRR does not believe that the proposed abandonment is likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as a critical habitat.

(ii) Sanctuaries, Refuges and Parks

SMVRR is unaware of any wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, National or State parks or forests, that would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

9. WATER

(i) Water Quality Standards

SMVRR does not intend to either appreciably remove or alter the contour of the roadbed underlying the rail line to be abandoned. The areal extent of disturbed areas will be kept to a minimum and limited to the ROW wherever possible. Since there are no plans to undertake instream work, or dredge and/or fill any materials in connection with the proposed abandonment, no water quality impacts are expected in connection with the proposed action. Therefore, SMVRR considers the abandonment to be consistent with any applicable Federal, State and/or local water quality standards.

(ii) Wetlands/100- Year Flood Plains

The line proposed for abandonment does not cross any creek, stream or river. Since the geometry of the roadbed will not be significantly altered, no discernible effects on 100-year flood plains are expected in connection with the proposed abandonment. Consequently, SMVRR does not believe a Section 404 permit will be required in connection with the proposed abandonment.

(iii) Section 402 Permit

Inasmuch as SMVRR does not intend to either appreciably remove or alter the contour of the roadbed underlying the rail line to be abandoned, undertake significant in-stream work, or dredge and/or fill any materials in connection with the proposed abandonment, water quality effects should be negligible. SMVRR does not believe that a permit under Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act will be required.

10. PROPOSED MITIGATION

Abandonment of the involved rail line is not expected to produce adverse environmental impacts. Only minimal physical activity associated with removal of rail, ties, and other railroad appurtenances will be produced by the proposed action. SMVRR will undertake all reasonable mitigation associated with these activities to assure that physical activities associated with the abandonment does not produce adverse environmental effects.

HISTORIC REPORT
PROPOSED RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company (hereinafter called SMVRR) proposes to abandon use of 4.87 miles of rail line from milepost 9.75 at College Drive to milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California. A Map delineating the line proposed for abandonment is attached as Exhibit "A".

The alternatives to abandonment of the line are to not abandon or to discontinue service on the line, retaining the trackage in place. Neither of these alternatives is economically feasible for SMVRR.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(1) U.S.G.S. Topographic Map - Maps were furnished to the California State Historic Preservation Office.

(2) Written Description of Right of Way - The right of way width varies, but is generally 25 feet on each side of the main track centerline. The line passes through residential (5%) and agricultural (95%) areas.

(3) Photographs - Not applicable. There are no structures on the line that are 50 years old and older.

(4) Date of Construction of Structures - Not applicable.

(5) History of Operations and Changes Contemplated - The subject 4.87-mile rail line of SMVRR, between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive and Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa

Maria, California, was built in 1911. SMVRR, chartered in 1911, was originally established to haul crude oil.

Shipments of crude oil declined and were replaced by agricultural commodities on the line segment to be abandoned. In recent years the transportation of agricultural commodities has switched to motor carrier. The last car handled on the line segment to be abandoned was handled in November, 1997. There is no longer a demand or need for rail transportation from the locations along this line of track.

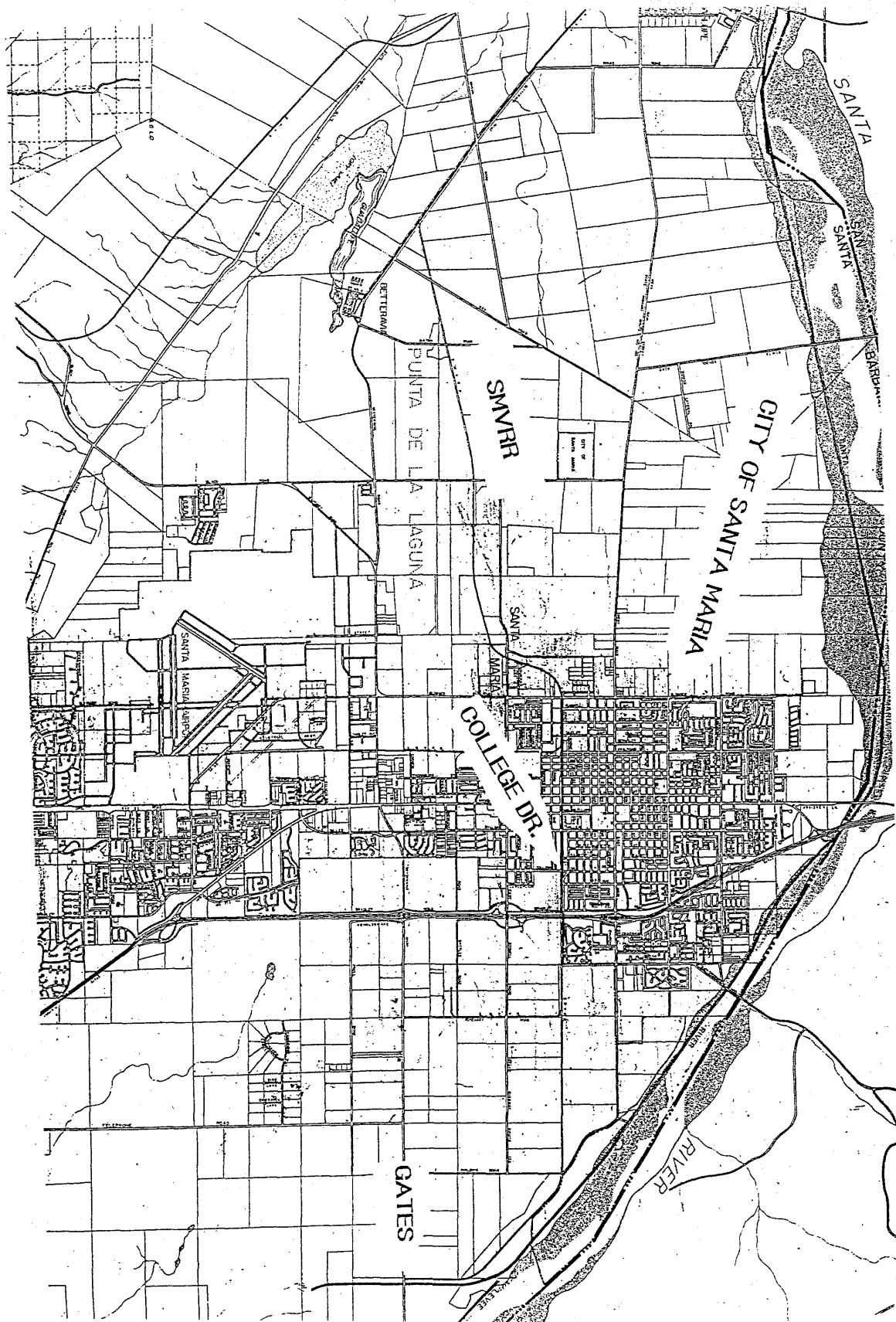
The change contemplated in the operation of this line of railroad track between College Drive and Gates Station, Santa Maria, California is for SMVRR to abandon the subject, unneeded and unproductive line of railroad; then selling the land to adjacent owners after salvaging other assets.

(6) Summary of Documents In Carrier's Possession That Might Be Useful for Documenting a Structure That Is Found To Be Historic - Not applicable.

(7) Opinion Regarding Criteria For Listing In The National Register Of Historic Places - There are no structures on the line to be abandoned. The line passes through residential and agricultural areas. SMVRR has no reason to believe that there is any likelihood of finding archaeological resources or historic properties on the line proposed for abandonment.

(8) Subsurface Ground Conditions That Might Affect Archaeological Recover - SMVRR is not aware of any prior subsurface ground disturbances or environmental conditions that would affect archaeological recovery.

(9) Follow-Up Information - Additional information will be provided as appropriate.



SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340
Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

State Clearing House Director
Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Docket No. AB-844, *Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company* -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

Attached are the Environmental and Historical Reports describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and/or historic effects, as well as a map of the affected area. We are providing these reports so that you may review the information that will form the basis for the STB's independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. If any of the information is misleading or incorrect, if you believe that pertinent information is missing, or if you have any questions about the STB's environmental review process, please contact the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423, telephone (202) 565-1538 and refer to the above Docket No. AB-844.

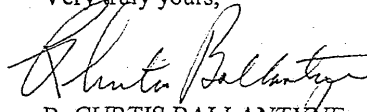
Because the applicable statutes and regulations impose stringent deadlines for processing this action, your written comments to SEA (with a copy to our representative) would be appreciated within 3 weeks. Your comments will be considered by the STB in evaluating the environmental and/or historic preservation impacts of the contemplated action.

If there are any questions concerning this proposal, please contact our representative directly. Our representative in this matter is **R. Curtis Ballantyne** who may be contacted by

State Clearing House Director
September 24, 2002
Page Two

telephone at (213) 621-0814, by e-mail at cballantyne@hfbllp.com, or by mail at Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP, One California Plaza, 37th Floor, 300 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90071-3147.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Curtis Ballantyne", is written over the typed name.

R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE
OF

HILL, FARRER & BURRILL LLP
Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

RCB:ajd
Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340
Telephone (805) 922-7941
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September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

Attached are the Environmental and Historical Reports describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and/or historic effects, as well as a map of the affected area. We are providing these reports so that you may review the information that will form the basis for the STB's independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. If any of the information is misleading or incorrect, if you believe that pertinent information is missing, or if you have any questions about the STB's environmental review process, please contact the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423, telephone (202) 565-1538 and refer to the above Docket No. AB-844.

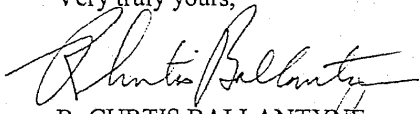
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California Environmental Protection Agency
September 24, 2002
Page Two

telephone at (213) 621-0814, by e-mail at cballantyne@hfbllp.com, or by mail at Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP, One California Plaza, 37th Floor, 300 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90071-3147.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Curtis Ballantyne", written over the printed name.

R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE
OF

HILL, FARRER & BURRILL LLP
Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

RCB:ajd
Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340

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September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Members of the Board:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

Attached are the Environmental and Historical Reports describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and/or historic effects, as well as a map of the affected area. We are providing these reports so that you may review the information that will form the basis for the STB's independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. If any of the information is misleading or incorrect, if you believe that pertinent information is missing, or if you have any questions about the STB's environmental review process, please contact the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423, telephone (202) 565-1538 and refer to the above Docket No. AB-844.

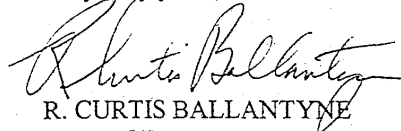
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If there are any questions concerning this proposal, please contact our representative directly. Our representative in this matter is **R. Curtis Ballantyne** who may be contacted by

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
September 24, 2002
Page Two

telephone at (213) 621-0814, by e-mail at cballantyne@hfbllp.com, or by mail at Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP, One California Plaza, 37th Floor, 300 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90071-3147.

Very truly yours,



R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE
OF

HILL, FARRER & BURRILL LLP
Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

RCB:ajd
Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

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Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

The Honorable Joseph Centeno, Mayor
City of Santa Maria
110 East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454-5190

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Mayor Centeno:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

Attached are the Environmental and Historical Reports describing the proposed action and any expected environmental and/or historic effects, as well as a map of the affected area. We are providing these reports so that you may review the information that will form the basis for the STB's independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. If any of the information is misleading or incorrect, if you believe that pertinent information is missing, or if you have any questions about the STB's environmental review process, please contact the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423, telephone (202) 565-1538 and refer to the above Docket No. AB-844.

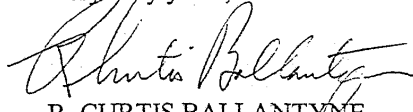
Because the applicable statutes and regulations impose stringent deadlines for processing this action, your written comments to SEA (with a copy to our representative) would be appreciated within 3 weeks. Your comments will be considered by the STB in evaluating the environmental and/or historic preservation impacts of the contemplated action.

If there are any questions concerning this proposal, please contact our representative directly. Our representative in this matter is **R. Curtis Ballantyne** who may be contacted by

The Honorable Joseph Centeno, Mayor
September 24, 2002
Page Two

telephone at (213) 621-0814, by e-mail at cballantyne@hfbllp.com, or by mail at Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP, One California Plaza, 37th Floor, 300 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90071-3147.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Curtis Ballantyne", written over a horizontal line.

R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE

OF

HILL, FARRER & BURRILL LLP
Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

RCB:ajd
Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340
Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line – Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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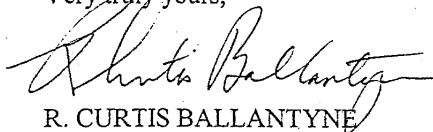
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
September 24, 2002
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OF

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Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

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Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340

Telephone (805) 922-7941

FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Region 1

Eastside Federal Complex

911 NE 11th Avenue

Portland, OR 97232-4181

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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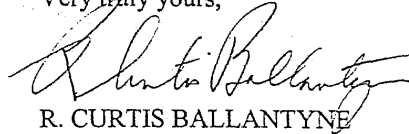
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
September 24, 2002
Page Two

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Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
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Enclosures

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340
Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District
333 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Docket No. AB-844, *Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company* -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line – Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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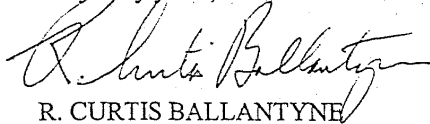
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
September 24, 2002
Page Two

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Very truly yours,

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R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE

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Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
Railroad Company

RCB:ajd
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Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

National Park Service
Pacific West Region
One Jackson Center
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Docket No. AB-844, *Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company* -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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National Park Service
September 24, 2002
Page Two

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FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service
Western Region Office
430 "G" Street, Suite 4165
Davis, CA 95616

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service
September 24, 2002
Page Two

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Very truly yours,



R. CURTIS BALLANTYNE

OF

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Attorneys for Santa Maria Valley
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Enclosures

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P.O. Box 340 • 625 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93456-0340
Telephone (805) 922-7941
FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Mr. Edward J. McKay
Chief, Spatial Reference System Division
DOC/NOAA
National Geodetic Survey N/CGS
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Springs, MD 20910-3282

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Mr. McKay:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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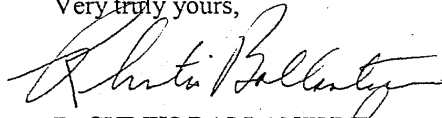
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Mr. Edward J. McKay
September 24, 2002
Page Two

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OF

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Telephone (805) 922-7941

FAX (805) 922-9554

September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Mr. Wesley M. Franklin
Executive Director
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

Re: Docket No. AB-844, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Mr. Franklin:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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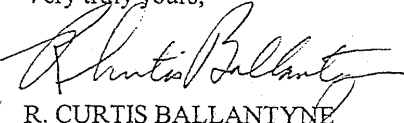
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Mr. Wesley M. Franklin
September 24, 2002
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September 24, 2002

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Office of Historic Preservation
1416 9th Street, Room 1442-7
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Docket No. AB-844, *Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company* -- proposed
abandonment of 4.87 miles of rail line -- Santa Maria, California

Dear Sir or Madam:

On or about October 25, 2002, Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company ("SMVRC") expects to be filing with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB") a Notice of Exemption seeking authority to abandon approximately 4.87 miles of SMVRC's rail line located between Milepost 9.75 at College Drive to Milepost 14.62 at Gates Station, Santa Maria, California.

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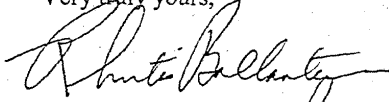
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California Department of Parks and Recreation
September 24, 2002
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