

DesertXpress adds that, in the near future, it will seek from the Board the necessary authority to construct the new line and related facilities and to conduct rail operations over the line.

DesertXpress argues that this project presumptively falls within the Board's jurisdiction over transportation by rail carriers as set forth at 49 U.S.C. 10901 and 10501. Petitioner therefore seeks an order from the Board declaring that this project is not subject to state and local environmental review, land use restrictions, and other discretionary permitting requirements in California and Nevada, including the California Environmental Quality Act, because they would impinge upon the federal regulation of interstate commerce. DesertXpress also asks that the Board act on this petition expeditiously to allow the project to advance as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Under 5 U.S.C. 554(e), the Board has discretionary authority to issue a declaratory order to terminate a controversy or remove uncertainty. A declaratory order proceeding is thus instituted in this proceeding to invite broad public comment. Any person seeking to participate in support of, or in opposition to, DesertXpress's proposal is invited to submit written comments to the Board regarding whether the agency's jurisdiction preempts state and local environmental review, land use restrictions, and other discretionary permitting requirements that might otherwise apply.

Board decisions, notices, and filings in this and other Board proceedings are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: August 25, 2006.

By the Board, Joseph H. Dettmar, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 442X)]

BNSF Railway Company— Abandonment Exemption—in Boulder County, CO

BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon a 1.13-mile line of railroad extending between milepost 36.72 and milepost 35.59, near Longmont, in Boulder County, CO. The

line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 80501.

BNSF has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line to be rerouted; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on September 30, 2006, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by September 11, 2006. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by September 20, 2006, with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to BNSF's representative: Sidney L. Strickland, Jr., Sidney Strickland and Associates, PLLC, 3050 K Street, NW., Suite 101, Washington, DC 20007.

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

² Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,300. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

BNSF has filed a combined environmental report and historic report which addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by September 5, 2006. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.] Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), BNSF shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by BNSF's filing of a notice of consummation by August 31, 2007, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: August 23, 2006.

By the Board, Joseph H. Dettmar, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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