

near South Sherman, Texas, milepost 645.5, on the Texas Division, Madill Subdivision, associated with the removal of the TNER crossing diamond. The proposed changes consist of the discontinuance and removal of all associated controlled and interlocked signals, conversion of the Old Frisco Main, power-operated switch to a spring switch, conversion of existing TNER power-operated switch to hand operation, discontinuance and removal of the power-operated derail on the TNER connection, and designation of the existing "Restricted Limits" operations between South Sherman, milepost 645.5 and Hank, milepost 647.7, to Track Warrant Control.

The reason given for the proposed changes is that the switches involved are presently controlled by the Interlocking operator, which will be retired with removal of the diamond.

**Docket No. FRA-1998-4697**

BS-AP-No. 3487

*Applicant:* CSX Transportation, Incorporated, Mr. R.M. Kadlick, Chief Engineer Train Control, 500 Water Street (S/C J-350), Jacksonville, Florida 32202

CSX Transportation, Incorporated seeks approval of the proposed modification of the traffic control system, on the single main, between milepost Z-37.0 and milepost Z-38.0, near Dante, Virginia, on the KP Subdivision, Appalachian Division, consisting of the conversion discontinuance and removal of controlled signals 38L and 38R.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to increase operating efficiency.

**Docket No. FRA-1998-4698**

BS-AP-No. 3488

*Applicant:* CSX Transportation, Incorporated, Mr. R.M. Kadlick, Chief Engineer Train Control, 500 Water Street (S/C J-350), Jacksonville, Florida 32202

CSX Transportation, Incorporated seeks approval of the proposed discontinuance and removal of the automatic block signal system, on the single and two main tracks, between FD Cabin, milepost CLS-65.2 and Huff Junction, milepost CLS-78.9, West Virginia, on the Logan Subdivision, C&O Business Unit, a distance of approximately 13.7 miles. The proposed method of operation will be by a Direct Traffic Control Block System between milepost CLS-67.1 and milepost CLS-78.9, and Rule 105 between milepost CLS-65.2 and milepost CLS-67.1.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to eliminate facilities no longer needed for present day operation.

**Docket No. FRA-1998-4699**

BS-AP-No. 3489

*Applicant:* CSX Transportation, Incorporated, Mr. R.M. Kadlick, Chief Engineer Train Control, 500 Water Street (S/C J-350), Jacksonville, Florida 32202

CSX Transportation, Incorporated seeks approval of the proposed modification of the traffic control and automatic block signal systems, on the two main tracks, between a milepost BG-89 and milepost BG-107, near Newton Falls, Ohio, on the New Castle Subdivision, Cumberland Division, consisting of the following:

1. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 3R, L3A, and L3B, at West Switch, milepost BG-105.31, and conversion of the power-operated switch to hand operation;

2. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals R5A, L5, R11, L11A, and L11B, at FS Tower, milepost BG-103.90, and conversion of the three power-operated switches to hand operation;

3. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals R13A, R13B, and LB, at East Switch, milepost BG-102.52, and conversion of the power-operated switch to hand operation;

4. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 2R, 2L, and E, near milepost BG-98.5, and conversion of the existing spring switch to hand operation;

5. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 6RA, 6RB, and 6L, near milepost BG-96.2, and conversion of the power-operated switch to hand operation;

6. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 18LA, 18LB, and 14R, near milepost BG-95.65, and conversion of the power-operated switch to hand operation; and

7. Discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 20RA, 20RB, W1, near milepost BG-94.5, and conversion of the existing spring switch to hand operation.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to increase efficiency and eliminate facilities no longer needed in present day operation.

**Docket No. FRA-1998-4700**

BS-AP-No. 3491

*Applicant:* Consolidated Rail Corporation, CSX Transportation, Incorporated, and Norfolk Southern Corporation, Mr. J.F. Noffsinger, Chief Engineer—C&S Assets, 2001 Market

Street, P.O. Box 41410, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101-1410.

The Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), CSX Transportation, Incorporated, and Norfolk Southern Corporation, jointly seek approval of the proposed discontinuance and removal of "CP Short" Interlocking, milepost 17.9, near Cleveland, Ohio, on Conrail's Dearborn Division, where two main tracks of the Short Line, cross at grade, the single main track of the Clark Branch. The proposal consists of the discontinuance and removal of all controlled signals, and conversion of the all remaining switches to hand operation.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to retire facilities no longer needed for present operation.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the Protester in the proceeding. The original and two copies of the protest shall be filed with the Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Mail Stop 25, Washington, D.C. 20590 within 30 calendar days of the date of publication of this notice. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on October 30, 1998.

**Grady C. Cothen, Jr.**

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Surface Transportation Board**

[Finance Docket No. 33556]

**Canadian National Railway Company, Grand Trunk Corporation, and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—Control—Illinois Central Corporation, Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chicago, Central and Pacific Railroad Company, and Cedar River Railroad Company**

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Decision No. 19; Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment and 30-day public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) issued a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the proposed acquisition of control of Illinois Central Corporation and its railroad affiliates (IC) by Canadian National Railway Company (CN). The Draft EA is available for public review and comment for 30 days. Public comments are due by December 11, 1998. Any interested party may request a copy of the Draft EA or submit comments on the Draft EA by following the procedures discussed below. The Draft EA addresses potential acquisition-related environmental impacts and includes SEA's preliminary environmental mitigation recommendations. In addition, the Draft EA includes a Safety Integration Plan prepared by CN and IC that explains how they propose to safely integrate their separate operations if the Board approves the proposed acquisition. After fully considering all public comments, SEA will consult with appropriate public agencies and conduct additional environmental analysis, as appropriate, in preparing a Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA). SEA plans to issue the Final EA prior to the Board's Oral Argument and Voting Conference, which are currently scheduled for March 1999. In making its final decision on the proposed acquisition, the Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments; the Draft EA; and the Final EA, including SEA's environmental mitigation recommendations. The Board plans to serve the final written decision on May 25, 1999. Any party may file an administrative appeal within 20 days of the Board's final written decision.

**DATES:** The Draft EA is available for public review and comment for 30 days. Public comments are due by December 11, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** All interested agencies, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to comment on the Draft EA by submitting written comments (include an original plus 10 copies) to the address listed below by December 11, 1998, the close of the comment period:

Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, Finance Docket No. 33556, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-001, Attn: Elaine K. Kaiser,

Environmental Project Director,  
Environmental Filing

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** To request a copy of the Draft EA or further information on the proposed CN/IC acquisition, interested parties may call SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-888-869-1997 (TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695), or access SEA's website for the CN/IC acquisition at <http://www.cnicacquisition.com>. For additional information regarding environmental issues, or the environmental review process, contact SEA's Project Manager for the proposed CN/IC acquisition, Michael Dalton, at (202) 565-1530.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On July 15, 1998, CN and IC, collectively referred to as CN/IC or applicants, filed a joint application<sup>1</sup> with the Board seeking authority for CN to acquire control of IC. The proposed CN/IC system would extend to both the east and west coasts of North America and the Gulf of Mexico. The Chicago area would serve as the hub of the combined system. This new system would cover approximately 18,670 miles of rail lines and related facilities, of which approximately 4,520 miles would be in the United States. The applicants state that integrating CN and IC operations would allow both rail systems to provide more reliable, efficient, and competitive service. The applicants also state that they anticipate relatively minor changes in rail operations as a result of the proposed acquisition. The applicants have proposed no rail line abandonments and only five minor construction projects (one rail line connection and four rail yard bypass tracks) as part of the proposed acquisition.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis.

**Vernon A. Williams,**

Secretary.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian National Railway Company, Grand Trunk Corporation, and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—Control—Illinois Central Corporation, Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chicago, Central and Pacific Railroad Company, and Cedar River Railroad Company, STB Finance Docket No. 33556.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-531 (Sub-No. 2X)]

#### Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—in Hampshire County, MA

Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc. (PVRR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately 0.26-mile line of railroad from milepost 9.40 at the Easthampton/Southampton border to milepost 9.14 at the south side of Coleman Road in Southampton, Hampshire County, MA. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 01073.

PVRR has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic formerly handled on the line can be rerouted over other lines; (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 (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 December 10, 1998, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>1</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA

<sup>1</sup> 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 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.