

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-297 (Sub-No. 101X)]

Columbus and Greenville Railway Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Bolivar and Washington Counties, MS

Columbus and Greenville Railway Company (C&G) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon 49.14 miles of rail line between milepost 109.3 near the City of Cleveland and milepost 158.44 near the City of Hollandale, in Bolivar and Washington Counties, MS. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 38732, 38730, 38773, 38742, 38756, 38722 and 38748.

C&G has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there has been no over head traffic on the line during the past 2 years; (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 March 6, 1999, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ any additional 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 February 16, 1999. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by February 24, 1999, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Wm. G. Burgin, Jr., 201 North 19th Street, Columbus and Greenville Railway Company, 201 North 19th Street, P.O. Box 6000, Columbus, MS 39701.

¹The 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.

²Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

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

C&G has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by February 9, 1999. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545. 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), C&G 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 C&G's filing of a notice of consummation by February 4, 2000, 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 website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: January 28, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-2559 Filed 2-3-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P