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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

January 5, 2004

Paul Thibault
Chairman
Lancaster County Commissioner's Office
50 North Duke Street
P.O. Box 83480
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17608-3480

Re: STB Docket No. AB 167 (Sub-No. 1095X), Consolidated Rail Corporation – Abandonment Exemption – in Lancaster and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania; Invitation to be Consulting Party under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Dear Mr. Thibault:

As you may know, the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is conducting a review of Consolidated Rail Corporation's proposed abandonment exemption in Lancaster and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania, pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

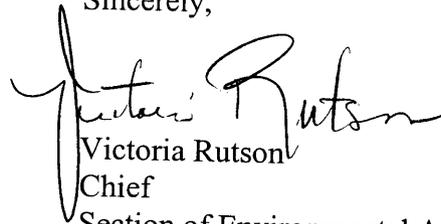
On November 19th, 2003, SEA held a public meeting in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, to solicit comments from the public regarding the draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), a document that sets forth several measures for mitigating adverse impacts to historic structures. SEA prepared the draft MOA in consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and Norfolk Southern Railway Company.

In addition to requesting comments from the public, we have also asked for comments on the draft MOA from the consulting parties (identified at the end of the draft MOA). Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the section 106 process at 36 CFR Part 800, consulting parties participate throughout the section 106 process and work with all involved parties to try to resolve issues. However, the concurrence of consulting parties in the final outcome of the section 106 process is not required.

During the public meeting, SEA received comments indicating that the Lancaster County Commissioners should be invited to participate as a consulting party in the section 106 process. Therefore, SEA is writing to invite you to participate as a consulting party in the section 106 process. If you would like to be included as a consulting party, we request that you provide us with the name and contact information for the individual who will act as the spokesperson for your organization throughout the section 106 process. We would also be interested in any comments you may have on the draft MOA and Notice to the Parties, which are enclosed for your convenience. We are anxious to continue moving forward with the section 106, so we would appreciate a response from you by January 30, 2004. If you prefer, you may indicate your interest in being a consulting party, but state that you have no further comments on the draft MOA.

If you have additional questions about the section 106 process or the role of consulting parties in the process, please do not hesitate to contact me or Troy Brady of my staff at (202) 565-1643. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria Rutson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Victoria Rutson
Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

Attachments