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SERVICE DATE - JUNE 23, 1999

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 382X)]

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company—Abandonment of Chicago
Area Trackage in Cook County, IL

On June 3, 1999, The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon its switching/industrial lead track beginning north of Corwith Yard at station 24 + 43 and ending at station 149 + 87 near the east end of the Western Avenue Bridge, a total distance of 2.38 miles within the city limits of Chicago, in Cook County, IL.¹ The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 60608, 60623, and 60632 and includes no stations.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in BNSF's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in Oregon Short Line R. Co.--Abandonment--Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

¹ BNSF states that the line is arguably not subject to regulation by the Board pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10906. However, to avoid any doubt over the status of the line and to avoid delays from possible litigation over the line's status, BNSF has elected to file this petition for exemption.

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by September 21, 1999. Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each offer must be accompanied by a \$1,000 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than July 13, 1999. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 382X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001, and (2) Sarah Whitley Bailiff, BNSF, 3017 Lou Menk Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76161-0039. Replies to the BNSF petition are due on or before July 13, 1999.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.²

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at
“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: June 16, 1999.

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

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary

² BNSF requests a waiver of the 20 days' advance service requirement for the environmental and historic reports (49 CFR 1105.7 and 1105.8), due to an urgent need to discontinue service because of safety concerns. Both reports were filed simultaneously with the petition for exemption. Given the circumstances, waiver of the advanced service requirement is granted.