

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

POST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN STB DOCKET NO. AB-577 (Sub No. 1X)

July 28, 2008

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) has expired in this:

(X) Notice of Exemption () Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

() **NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

(X) **NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED**

SEA served an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proceeding on July 11, 2008 for public review and comment. In the EA, SEA recommended two environmental conditions and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Comments on the EA

SEA received one comment after issuance of the EA.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has submitted a letter in response to Mohall Railroad's (MRI) request for comments. NRCS states that the proposed abandonment should have no significant impact on existing soil and water conservation practices in the area. In addition, NRCS had comments relating to existing drainage patterns, the preservation of wetlands and natural watercourses, and the disturbance of native prairie. MRI responded to the Board concerning NRCS's comments as follows:

1. During salvage, MRI will maintain all drainage patterns.
2. MRI will not place any soil into wetlands or natural watercourses and be mindful of erosion control measures.
3. MRI will not be doing any construction through wetlands in salvaging the track and ties; and
4. MRI does not believe it will disturb any native prairie as it will only remove the track and ties, leaving the ballast and underlying roadbed undisturbed.

SEA concurs with MRI that its proposed work meets all guidelines requested by the NRCS. Accordingly, no conditions will be required to ensure measures are taken to prevent soil erosion.

Conclusions

The EA comment period has ended. Accordingly, SEA recommends that the following conditions previously recommended in the EA should be imposed upon any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. Prior to commencement of any salvage activities, Mohall Railroad, Inc. shall consult with the St. Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regarding its requirements and, if applicable, shall comply with the reasonable requirements of the Corps.
2. To address the concerns of the North Dakota Department of Health, Environmental Health Section (Department of Health) regarding matters such as salvage and disposal activities, Mohall Railroad, Inc. shall coordinate with the Department of Health to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented during the proposed salvage activities.

If the above conditions are imposed, SEA believes that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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