



FR-4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket Nos. AB 290 (Sub-No. 394X); AB 1257X]

Norfolk Southern Railway Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Aurora, Portage County, Ohio; Cleveland Commercial Railroad Company, LLC—Discontinuance of Lease and Operation Authority—in Aurora, Portage County, Ohio

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) and Cleveland Commercial Railroad Company, LLC (CCR) (collectively, Applicants), have jointly filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service for NSR to abandon, and for CCR to discontinue service over, approximately 5.5 miles of rail line between milepost RH 22.0 and milepost RH 27.5 in Aurora, Portage County, Ohio (the Line).<sup>1</sup> The Line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 44202 and 44255.

Applicants have certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years; (2) no overhead traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years and that overhead traffic, if there were any, could 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 two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7(c) (environmental report), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal

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<sup>1</sup> In 2009, CCR was authorized to lease and operate the Line as part of a longer, 25.3-mile line, pursuant to an agreement with NSR. See Cleveland Commercial R.R.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Norfolk S. Ry., FD 35251 (STB served May 29, 2009).

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 these exemptions, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho, 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, these exemptions will be effective on January 2, 2018, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>2</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>3</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by December 11, 2017. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by December 21, 2017, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

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<sup>2</sup> The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemptions' effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Serv. 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 exemptions' effective date.

<sup>3</sup> Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,800. See Regulations Governing Fees for Servs. Performed in Connection with Licensing & Related Servs.—2017 Update, EP 542 (Sub-No. 25), slip op. App. C at 20 (STB served July 28, 2017).

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to William A. Mullins, Baker & Miller PLLC, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20037.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemptions are void ab initio.

Applicants have filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. OEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by December 8, 2017. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to OEA (Room 1100, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339. 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), NSR 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 NSR's filing of a notice of consummation by December 1, 2018, 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.GOV](http://WWW.STB.GOV).

Decided: November 27, 2017.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Clerk.

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