



## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**[Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 424X); Docket No. AB 414 (Sub-No. 9X)]**

**Norfolk Southern Railway Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Polk County, Iowa; Iowa Interstate Railroad—Discontinuance of Lease and Operation Authority—in Polk County, Iowa**

On April 14, 2026, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) and Iowa Interstate Railroad, LLC (IAIS) (collectively, Petitioners), jointly filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for an exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 for NSR to abandon and for IAIS to discontinue service over an approximately 12.2-mile rail line, extending from milepost DU 340.8 +/- to milepost DU 353.0 +/-, together with the 0.8-mile un-mileposted Clive Spur (collectively, the Line), all in Polk County, Iowa. There are two stations on the Line: Des Moines, Iowa and Grimes, Iowa. The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 50111, 50322, 50324, 50325, 50265, and 50312.

The Petitioners state that NSR seeks authority to abandon the Line and IAIS seeks to discontinue its lease and operation authority because “the traffic and revenues from the remaining shippers on the Line are insufficient to cover the direct costs of providing rail service let alone the costs of normalized maintenance and opportunity costs.” (Pet. 5.) They assert that, given the Line’s declining traffic base, the substantial operating and annual maintenance costs, and the absence of prospective new business, the Line is not economically viable for IAIS, NSR, or any potential new operator. (*Id.*) Petitioners further state that, in recent years, the Line has served very few shippers and that there are transloading opportunities available for the vast majority of the traffic moving over the Line. (*Id.* at 8.)

According to Petitioners, based on the information in their possession, the Line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. (Id. at 3.) Petitioners state that any documentation in either of their possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. (Id.)

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuing this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by July 31, 2026.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 120 days after the filing of the petition for exemption, or 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption, whichever occurs sooner. Persons interested in submitting an OFA must first file a formal expression of intent to file an offer by May 14, 2026, indicating the type of financial assistance they wish to provide (i.e., subsidy or purchase) and demonstrating that they are preliminarily financially responsible. See 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(1)(i).

Following abandonment, the Line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use.<sup>1</sup> Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for interim trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than May 22, 2026.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Polk County Conservation Board; the Cities of Des Moines, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Urbandale, Clive, and Grimes; and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation jointly filed a request for imposition of a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905 and for issuance of a notice of interim trail use or abandonment under the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d), for the Line between milepost DU 340.8 and milepost DU 353.0. The Board will address this public use and trail use request, and any others that may be filed, in a subsequent decision.

<sup>2</sup> Filing fees for OFAs and trail use requests can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25) and (27), respectively.

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 424X) or AB 414 (Sub-No. 9X), must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing on the Board's website or in writing addressed to 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on NSR's representative, William A. Mullins, Mullins Law Group PLLC, 2001 L St., N.W., Suite 720, Washington, DC 20036, and IAIS's representative, Onna B. Houck, Iowa Interstate Railroad, LLC, 203 2nd Street, SE, Suite 500, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Replies to the petition are due on or before May 26, 2026.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance at (202) 245-0238 or refer to the full abandonment regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) at (202) 245-0294. If you require an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please call (202) 245-0245.

OEA will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary), which will be served upon all parties of record and upon any other agencies or persons who comment during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact OEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in 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 generally will be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: April 29, 2026.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.

**Regena Smith-Bernard,**

*Clearance Clerk.*

