

ACTION: Amended notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); addition of U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation as cooperating agencies.

SUMMARY: On February 20, 1998, the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. The project would require actions by a number of Federal agencies, including the Board, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), who previously agreed to be cooperating agencies for the EIS. As part of its plans to rebuild its rail line through Pierre, South Dakota, DM&E proposes to rebuild its existing bridge or construct a new bridge over the Missouri River to permit the operation of unit coal trains. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has responsibility and authority to issue bridge permits under the provisions of Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and under the General Bridge Act of 1946. Therefore, in order for DM&E to rebuild or construct a new bridge over navigable waters, it must apply for a permit from the USCG, which in turn would require an environmental review of DM&E's action pursuant to NEPA. The U.S.D.I. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) is the agency responsible for operation and administration of the Angostura Reservoir and associated irrigation canals and ditches. The USBR works closely with the local irrigation district for repayment of project costs based on water delivered and acres of irrigated land. If this project crosses lands, irrigation ditches or canals under the jurisdiction of the USBR, a permit for such crossings will be required from the USBR prior to construction. Depending on the alternative approved for construction, the USBR may be required to issue a permit, which would normally require environmental review. Consequently, USCG and USBR have agreed to be cooperating agencies for the EIS. The purpose of this Amended Notice of Intent is to notify persons and

agencies interested in or affected by the proposed project of additional USCG and USBR decisions triggered by the project.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Environmental Review Process

The Board has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prior to its decisions on the proposed project.

The Board is the lead agency, pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.5(c), supervising the preparation of the EIS. The USFS, BLM, COE, USCG, and USBR are cooperating agencies, pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.6, and shall adopt the EIS and base their respective decisions on it. The NEPA process is intended to assist the Board, its cooperating agencies, and the public in identifying and assessing the potential environmental consequences of a proposed action before a decision on the proposed action is made. The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is responsible for ensuring that the Board complies with the NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4335, and related environmental statutes. The EIS should include all of the information necessary for decisions by the Board and the cooperating agencies.

SEA and the cooperating agencies are preparing a Draft EIS (DEIS) for the proposed project. The DEIS will address those environmental issues and concerns identified during the scoping process and detailed in the scope of study. It will also contain a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action and recommended environmental mitigation measures. The DEIS will be made available upon its completion for public review and comment. A Final EIS (FEIS) will then be prepared reflecting SEA's further analysis and the comments on the DEIS. In reaching each decision in this case, the agencies will take into account the DEIS, the FEIS, and all public and agency comments received.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Victoria Rutson, Project Manager, Surface Transportation Board, Powder River Basin Expansion Project, 1-877-404-3044;
U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Wendy Schmitzer, (307) 358-4690;
U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management, Bill Carson, (307) 746-4453;
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jerry Folkers, (402) 221-4173;
U.S. Coast Guard, Roger Wiebusch, (314) 539-3900, ext. 378;
U.S.D.I. Bureau of Reclamation, Dennis Breitzman, (701) 250-4242, ext. 3101.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 143X)]

**Union Pacific Railroad Co.—
Abandonment and Discontinuance of
Trackage Rights Exemption—in
Wright, Franklin and Cerro Gordo
Counties, IA**

Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service and Trackage Rights* to abandon a 12.38-mile line of railroad over the Thornton Industrial Lead (formerly known as the Fort Dodge Branch) from milepost 17.14 near Thornton to milepost 29.52 near Belmond, in Wright, Franklin and Cerro Gordo Counties, IA.¹ The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 50421, 50449, 50457, and 50479.

UP has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic moving over the line; (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 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal 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 this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment and discontinuance shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C.

¹ Pursuant to 49 CFR 1150.50(d)(2), the railroad must file a verified notice with the Board at least 50 days before the abandonment or discontinuance is to be consummated. The applicant in its verified notice, indicated a proposed consummation date of February 7, 2000. Because the verified notice was officially filed upon payment of the required filing fee on December 23, 1999, consummation may not take place prior to February 11, 2000. Applicant's representative has been contacted and has confirmed that consummation may occur no earlier than February 11, 2000.

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, this exemption will be effective on February 11, 2000, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),³ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by January 24, 2000. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by February 1, 2000, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: James P. Gatlin, General Attorney, Union Pacific Railroad Company, 1416 Dodge Street, Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

UP has filed an environmental report which addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment and discontinuance on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by January 14, 2000. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545. 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), UP shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned its line. If consummation has not been effected by UP's filing of a notice of consummation by January 12, 2001, 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.DOT.GOV."

Decided: January 5, 2000.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Departmental Offices, Debt Management Advisory Committee; Meeting

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. App. § 10(a)(2), that a meeting will be held at the U.S. Treasury Department, 15th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., on February 1, 2000, of the following debt management advisory committee: The Bond Market Association, Treasury Borrowing Advisory Committee.

The agenda for the meeting provides for a technical background briefing by Treasury staff, followed by a charge by the Secretary of the Treasury or his designate that the committee discuss particular issues, and a working session. Following the working session, the committee will present a written report of its recommendations.

The background briefing by Treasury staff will be held at 9:00 a.m. Eastern

time and will be open to the public. The remaining sessions and the committee's reporting session will be closed to the public, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. App. § 10(d).

The notice shall constitute my determination, pursuant to the authority placed in heads of departments by 5 U.S.C. App. § 10(d) and vested in me by Treasury Department Order No. 101-05, that the closed portions of the meeting are concerned with information that is exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c)(9)(A). The public interest requires that such meetings be closed to the public because the Treasury Department requires frank and full advice from representatives of the financial community prior to making its final decision on major financing operations. Historically, this advice has been offered by debt management advisory committees established by the several major segments of the financial community. When so utilized, such a committee is recognized to be an advisory committee under 5 U.S.C. App. § 3.

Although the Treasury's final announcement of financing plans may not reflect the recommendations provided in reports of the advisory committee, premature disclosure of the committee's deliberations and reports would be likely to lead to significant financial speculation in the securities market. Thus, these meetings fall within the exemption covered by 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c)(9)(A).

The Office of Financial Markets is responsible for maintaining records of debt management advisory committee meetings and for providing annual reports setting forth a summary of committee activities and such other matters as may be informative to the public consistent with the policy of 5 U.S.C. § 552b.

Dated: January 6, 2000.

Lee Sachs,

Assistant Secretary (Financial Markets).

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² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service 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 exemption's effective date.

³ Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).