

**Surface Transportation Board Finalizes Approval for "Illinois Central" to Construct 3.2-Mile Rail Line in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana**

Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced today that the Board has issued a decision authorizing the Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) to construct and operate a 3.2-mile line of railroad in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The line would connect IC's Maryland Industrial Lead with the Baton Rouge Polyolefins (BRPO) plant of ExxonMobil Chemical Company (ExxonMobil). The proposed line would allow a second railroad to provide service to the BRPO plant. IC's construction project is subject to specific environmental impact mitigation measures.

ExxonMobil's BRPO plant is one of the world's largest producers of high-density polyethylene and polypropylene plastics. The plant daily generates an average of approximately 35 carloads of outbound plastic pellets and monthly receives approximately 15 tank cars of solvents used in the manufacturing process. The plant's total production capacity is now approximately 2.6 billion pounds of plastics annually. Approximately 90 percent of the plant's current production is shipped in plastic pellet or granular form in covered hopper cars furnished by ExxonMobil to distribution terminals and plants throughout North America.

In October 2001, the Board conditionally granted, subject to environmental review, IC's petition to construct and operate the proposed 3.2-mile line over the opposition of The Kansas City Southern Railway Company, which currently operates a line into the BRPO plant. In an environmental assessment (EA) issued to the public, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) preliminarily concluded that the proposed construction and operation would have no significant environmental impacts if SEA's recommended mitigation measures were imposed. In its post-environmental assessment analysis prepared following the Board's receipt of public comments on the EA, SEA concluded that the EA adequately identified and assessed potential environmental impacts. The Board's final decision issued today adopts SEA's recommended mitigation measures and imposes them as conditions to the exemption from regulation granted to IC for this construction. The Board also has included an additional mitigation measure reflecting a post-environmental review agreement reached by IC and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development regarding operation of the proposed at-grade crossing where IC's rail line would cross U.S. Highway 61 in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The Board issued its decision today in the case entitled *Illinois Central Railroad Company--Construction and Operation Exemption--In East Baton Rouge Parish, LA*, in STB Finance Docket No. 33877. A printed copy of the decision is available for a fee by contacting **Da-2-Da Legal, Room 405, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 293-7776**, or via [http://Da\\_To\\_Da@Hotmail.com](mailto:Da_To_Da@Hotmail.com). The decision also is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

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