

Surface Transportation Board to Hold November 19 Public Meeting in Quarryville, PA, on Proposed "Enola Branch" Rail Line Abandonment

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) today announced that it will hold a public meeting to receive comments on a proposed draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the involved parties for the "Enola Branch" rail line abandonment proceeding in the case entitled *Consolidated Rail Corporation--Abandonment Exemption--Lancaster and Chester Counties, PA*, Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1095X). SEA will host the meeting at **the Hoffman Building, located at the Solanco Fair Ground in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday, November 19, 2003, in two identical sessions. An afternoon session will be held from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and an evening session will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

Meeting Format: SEA will brief the public about this proceeding and the proposed draft MOA, and interested parties may submit written comments or make oral comments. SEA will make a court reporter available at each session to ensure that oral comments are recorded accurately. Both the afternoon and evening sessions will follow the same format and agenda; it is unnecessary for interested parties to attend both sessions.

Pre-Registration for the Meeting: Persons wishing to speak at the public meeting are urged to pre-register by telephoning **(202) 565-1643** to provide their names, telephone numbers, and the names of any group, business, or agency they represent, if applicable, and to indicate whether they wish to speak at the afternoon or evening session. The deadline for pre-registration is **November 7, 2003**. Those wishing to speak but who do not pre-register will be accommodated at each session only as time allows.

In addition to oral comments received at the public meeting, SEA will also accept written comments on the proposed draft MOA. Written comments must be postmarked by **December 3, 2003**. Please send an **original and two copies** to the following address:

**Case Control Unit
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Please include the following information in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope:

Attention: Troy Brady
Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1095X)

A Fact Sheet concerning Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1095X) is attached.

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ATTACHMENT

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Proposed "Enola Branch" Rail Line Abandonment

Consolidated Rail Corporation--Abandonment Exemption--Lancaster and Chester Counties, PA, Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1095X)

The public meeting is an important step leading toward completion of the "section 106 process" of the National Historic Preservation Act at section 470f of Title 16, *United States Code* (16 U.S.C. 470f). The section 106 process contains three phases (the Identification Phase, the Assessment Phase, and the Mitigation Phase) requiring Federal agencies to evaluate the effects of a proposed project on historic properties. SEA has completed the Identification Phase and the Assessment Phase, and is working toward completion of the Mitigation Phase.

SEA is also seeking comments on a Notice to the Parties (October 2003 Notice), issued today, discussing the possibility of converting the rail right-of-way to interim trail use/rail banking according to 16 U.S.C. 1247(d), or a privately negotiated trail use agreement entered into after the abandonment is consummated. The October 2003 Notice clarifies that any agreement for trail use must be entered into outside of the section 106 process, but would likely make the mitigation phase of the section 106 process unnecessary.

Summary of the Draft MOA: SEA has developed the proposed draft MOA in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (SHPO), and Norfolk Southern Railway Corporation. The proposed draft MOA sets forth several measures for mitigating adverse effects to historic properties, including:

- Documentation of appropriate representative structures on the Enola Branch rail line to Pennsylvania state standards.
- Archival research of the history of the Enola Branch rail line.
- Consolidation of documentation and results of archival research into one cohesive document to be archived at the SHPO's office.

SEA will consider all comments on the proposed draft MOA in preparing a final MOA and concluding the section 106 process for this proceeding.

Documents and comments previously submitted in this section 106 process are available on the Board's website. They may be accessed by visiting www.stb.dot.gov, selecting "Environmental Issues" on the home page, selecting "Key Cases" on the Environmental Analysis page, then selecting "Enola Branch" on the Key Cases page.

Availability of the Draft MOA: The proposed draft MOA is an attachment to the October 2003 Notice issued today summarizing the status of this proceeding and announcing the forthcoming public meeting in Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1095X). A printed copy of that decision is available for a fee by contacting **D~ 2 D~ Legal Copy Service, Suite 405, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 293-7776**, or via da2dalegal@earthlink.net. The decision also is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

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