

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Highway Administration****Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Pulaski County, Arkansas**

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Pulaski County, Arkansas.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Elizabeth A. Romero, Environmental Specialist, Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3130, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72201-3298, Telephone: (501) 324-6430.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FHWA, in cooperation with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department will prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) on a proposal to construct a four-lane, divided, fully controlled access facility located on new alignment. In 1994, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and a Record of Decision (ROD) identified a selected alignment. However, a portion of this alignment was not compatible with the City of Sherwood's Master Street Plan and was not included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) developed by Metroplan, the responsible Metropolitan Planning organization. Due to the time (3 years +) since the ROD and existence of the local concerns, a reevaluation was deemed necessary. This preliminary reevaluation resulted in the identification of a new alternative alignment more compatible with the City of Sherwood's Master Street Plan, thereby necessitating the need for the proposed Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

The proposed project will primarily serve central Arkansas including Little Rock, North Little Rock, Sherwood, Jacksonville, and northern Pulaski County, Arkansas. The Supplemental Draft EIS will address a new alternative and three previously studied alternatives located between the Highway 107/Brockington Road interchange and the eastern boundary of Camp Robinson near Maryland Avenue and Batesville Pike. These three previously studied alternatives were

evaluated in the project's Draft EIS in 1991 and Final EIS in 1994.

The Supplemental EIS will focus on the study area between Batesville Pike and Brockington Road in northern Pulaski County, since this is the portion of the proposed corridor where several alternative alignments are being considered. The remaining portions of the selected and approved Northbelt Freeway alignment to the east toward U.S. Highway 67/167 and to the west through Camp Robinson ending at the I-430/I-40 interchange will be reviewed only to a level to document if any substantial changes have taken place since the completion of the project's Final EIS.

In addition to documenting the engineering and environmental aspects of a new alignment alternative and updating three previously studied alignment alternatives, the SDEIS will provide a comparative analysis of the project's feasible alternatives with the primary goal of the identification of a preferred alternative for the entire freeway project from U.S. 67/167 to the I-430/I-40 interchange. This evaluation will also include a determination of how these project alternatives relate to Metroplan's and the City of Sherwood's Long-Range Plans and Master Street Plans.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and to private organizations who have expressed interest in the project in the past. A formal public hearing will be held in the North Little Rock/Sherwood area during the circulation of the SDEIS. Public notice in major Arkansas newspapers including news releases and specific advertisements will be used to inform the public of the time and place of the public hearing. The SDEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are cooperating agencies for the EIS. A formal scoping meeting for these Northbelt freeway alternatives will be held and an opportunity for public comment will be provided.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action and all significant issues are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA Arkansas Division at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation of Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: February 11, 1999.

**Elizabeth A. Romero,**

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Surface Transportation Board**

[STB Docket No. AB-325 (Sub-No. 1X)]

**Florida Midland Railroad Company, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—in Polk County, FL**

Florida Midland Railroad Company, Inc. (FMID) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately 0.18-mile line of railroad on the Lake Wales Spur from milepost SV-967.47 at Scenic Highway to milepost SV-967.65 at Fourth Street, in Lakes Wales, Polk County, FL. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 33853.

FMID has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic on the line can 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 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 shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 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, this exemption will be effective on March 20, 1999, unless