

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement; Clay and St. Johns Counties, Florida**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent.

**SUMMARY:** The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Clay and St. Johns Counties, Florida.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Greg Hall, Transportation Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 545 John Knox Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, Telephone 850-942-9650.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FHWA, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, will prepare an EIS for a proposal to connect the proposed SR 21/SR 23 Interchange (Blanding Boulevard/Branan-Field Chaffee Road) in Clay County eastward across the St. Johns River to either I-95, or to the southern extension of SR 9B in the vicinity of Racetrack Road in St. Johns County. The proposed action is based upon the population growth projections and regional transportation system needs. Alternatives under consideration include (1) Taking no action; (2) four lane roadways in Clay and St. Johns Counties with the St. Johns River crossing parallel to the existing Shands Bridge, and (3) four lane roadways in Clay and St. Johns counties with the St. Johns River crossing between the Buckman Bridge and the Shands Bridge.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have expressed interest in this proposal. Public meetings were held in Clay and St. Johns Counties in November 2005 and August 2006. Public Workshops were held in Clay, St. Johns, and Duval Counties in August 2006. A Public Hearing will also be conducted. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Draft EIS will be made available for public and agency review and comment. An interagency coordination meeting was conducted in June 2006. The proposed project has received comment from agencies participating in Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. These comments, and a summary of project related issues, can

be viewed in the Environmental Screening Tool at <http://etdmpub.flahighway.gov/>. Additional project related information may also be viewed at the St. Johns River Crossing, Project Development & Environmental Study Web site at <http://www.sjrbridge.com/documents.htm>. There are no plans to hold a formal scoping meeting after this notice of intent to prepare an EIS. The information gained through agency meetings, the ETDM process, and public involvement will be used for scoping.

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

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

Issued On: August 29, 2006.

**Robert S. Wright,**

*Assistant Division Director, Tallahassee, Florida.*

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

[STB Docket No. AB-497 (Sub-No. 3X)]

**Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.- Abandonment Exemption-in Polk and Norman Counties, MN**

On August 16, 2006, Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc. (MNN), filed with the Board a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a 17.0-mile portion of its Ada Subdivision between milepost 64.0, south of Beltrami, and the end of the line at milepost 47.0, south of Ada, in Polk and Norman Counties, MN. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 56500, 56510, and 56517.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in MNN's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.— Abandonment—Goshen*, 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 December 4, 2006.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,300 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than September 25, 2006. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$200 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-497 (Sub-No. 3X), and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Thomas F. McFarland, Thomas F. McFarland, P.C., 208 South LaSalle Street, Suite 1890, Chicago, IL 60604-1112. Replies to the petition are due on or before September 25, 2006.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

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

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov/>.

Decided: August 28, 2006.