

105–292), notice is hereby given that, on December 18, 2019, the Secretary of State, under authority delegated by the President, has designated each of the following as an “entity of particular concern” under section 301 of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016 (Pub. L. 114–281), for having engaged in particularly severe violations of religious freedom: al-Nusra Front, al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qa’ida, al-Shabab, Boko Haram, the Houthis, ISIS, ISIS-Khorasan, and the Taliban.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Howard Chyung, Office of International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State, (Phone: (202) 647–3865 or Email: ChyungHH@state.gov).

Daniel L. Nadel,

Director, Office of International Religious Freedom, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2019–27787 Filed 12–23–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–18–P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36370]

CCET, LLC d/b/a Cincinnati Eastern Railroad—Lease and Operation Exemption—Norfolk Southern Railway Company

CCET, LLC d/b/a Cincinnati Eastern Railroad (CCET), a Class III railroad, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to continue its lease of, and its provision of railroad common carrier service over, approximately 69.45 route miles of railroad owned by Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR), from milepost CT 9.0 at Clare, Ohio, at its west end, to milepost CT 78.45 at Mineral Springs, Ohio (the Line).

CCET states that it and NSR are parties to an agreement under which CCET has acquired a leasehold interest in, and operates, the Line, segments of which were leased to CCET in sequence beginning in 2014.¹ The verified notice indicates that recently, CCET and NSR agreed to amend the underlying lease agreement, including an extension of the term.

According to CCET, the amended lease agreement between CCET and NSR does not contain any provision that

prohibits, restricts, or otherwise limits, interchange of traffic with any third-party carrier.

CCET certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of the proposed transaction will not exceed \$5 million and that the transaction will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier.

This transaction may be consummated on or after January 9, 2020, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than January 2, 2020 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36370, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing or in writing addressed to 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on CCET’s representative, Robert A. Wimbish, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606–3208.

According to CCET, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: December 18, 2019.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2019–27674 Filed 12–23–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–01–P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. AB 434 (Sub-No. 4X)]

Winchester & Western Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Cumberland County, N.J.

Winchester & Western Railroad Co. (W&W) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately 0.5-mile line of railroad, from approximately milepost 16.2 to milepost 16.7, in the Township of Commercial, Cumberland

County, N.J. (the Line). The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 08349.

W&W has certified that: (1) No local common carrier freight traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years; (2) no overhead traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years and, therefore, there is no need to reroute any traffic; (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 any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of a complainant within the two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies), and 49 CFR 1105.7 and 1105.8 (environmental and historic report), have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 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,¹ this exemption will be effective on January 25, 2020, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues must be filed by January 3, 2020.² Formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2) and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by January 6, 2020.³ Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by January 15,

¹ Persons interested in submitting an OFA must first file a formal expression of intent to file an offer, indicating the type of financial assistance they wish to provide (*i.e.*, subsidy or purchase) and demonstrating that they are preliminarily financially responsible. See 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2)(i).

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board’s Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption’s effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Serv. 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 Filing fees for OFAs and trail use requests can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25) and (27), respectively.

¹ See *CCET, LLC—Lease & Operation Exemption—Rail Line of Norfolk S. Ry. in Adams Cty., Ohio*, FD 36079 (STB served Dec. 7, 2016); *CCET, LLC—Lease & Operation Exemption—Rail Line of Norfolk S. Ry. in Clermont, Brown, & Adams Cts., Ohio*, FD 35900 (STB served Feb. 6, 2015); *CCET, LLC—Lease & Operation Exemption—Rail Line of Norfolk S. Ry., FD 35810* (STB served Apr. 4, 2014).

2020, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with Board should be sent to W&W's representative, Edward D. Greenberg, GKG Law, P.C., The Foundry Building, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20007.

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

W&W has filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the potential effects of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources.⁴ OEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by December 31, 2019. The EA will be available to interested persons on the Board's website, by writing to OEA, or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. 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), W&W shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the Line. If consummation has not been effected by W&W's filing a notice of consummation by December 26, 2020, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: December 18, 2019.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Kenyatta Clay,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2019-27661 Filed 12-23-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 406X)]

Norfolk Southern Railway Company— Abandonment Exemption—in the City of Fort Wayne, Ind.

On December 6, 2019, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) filed with the Surface Transportation Board a

petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon an approximately 2.29-mile rail line, previously known as the Fourth Street Industrial Track, extending from milepost GI 0.0 to milepost GI 2.29 in the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County, Ind. (the Line). The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 46805 and 46808. NSR states that the Line previously included the station of Fourth Street.

NSR states that it is seeking to abandon the Line because it has been dormant for nearly two decades. (NSR Pet. 11.) On October 23, 2019, the Board rejected a verified notice of exemption filed by NSR to abandon the Line, finding that the class exemption procedure was inappropriate given the factual and legal questions raised by the verified notice of exemption, including questions regarding the Line's classification. *Norfolk S. Ry.—Aban. Exemption—in the City of Fort Wayne, Ind.*, AB 290 (Sub-No. 403X) (STB served Oct. 23, 2019). In its petition, NSR states that, on balance, the facts suggest that the Line is a line of railroad governed by 49 U.S.C. 10901 rather than excepted track governed by 49 U.S.C. 10906. (NSR Pet. 11.)

According to NSR, the Line does not contain any federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in NSR'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 Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 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 March 25, 2020.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) for continued rail service will be due no later than 120 days after the filing of the petition for exemption, or 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption, whichever occurs sooner. Persons interested in submitting an OFA must first file a formal expression of intent to file an offer by January 6, 2019, indicating the type of financial assistance they wish to provide (*i.e.*, subsidy or purchase) and demonstrating that they are preliminarily financially responsible. See 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(1)(i).

Following authorization for abandonment, 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 January 15, 2020.¹

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 406X), must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing or in writing addressed to 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on NSR's representatives, William A. Mullins and Crystal M. Zorbaugh, Baker & Miller PLLC, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20037. Replies to the petition are due on or before January 15, 2020.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance at (202) 245-0238 or refer to the full abandonment regulations at 49 CFR part 1152.

Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: December 17, 2019.

By the Board, Allison C. Davis, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2019-27670 Filed 12-23-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. EP 290 (Sub-No. 5) (2020-1)]

Quarterly Rail Cost Adjustment Factor

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

⁴ On December 11, 2019, W&W supplemented its historic report with a letter from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.

¹ The filing fees for OFAs and trail use requests can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25) and (27), respectively.