

Surface Transportation Board

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application is filed with the Board, at each agency station or terminal on the line proposed to be abandoned or discontinued (if there is no agency station on the line, the application shall be deposited at any agency station through which business for the line is received or forwarded). A certificate of service shall be promptly filed with the Board.

(d) The applicant shall promptly furnish by first class mail a copy of the application to any interested person proposing to file a written comment or protest upon request. A certificate of service shall promptly be filed with the Board.

(e)(1) The Board shall reject any abandonment or discontinuance application which does not substantially conform to the regulations in this subpart C regarding notice, form, and content, or which applies to a line which has not properly been published on the carrier's system diagram map (or included in a narrative in the case of a Class III carrier), in conformance with the regulations of subpart B of this part.

(2) Upon the filing of an abandonment or discontinuance application, the Board will review the application and determine whether it conforms with all applicable regulations. If the application is substantially incomplete or its filing otherwise defective, the Board shall reject the application for stated reasons by order (which order will be administratively final) within 20 days from the date of filing of the application. If the Board does not reject the application, notice of the filing of the application shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER by the Board, through the Director of the Office of Proceedings, within 20 days of the filing of the application.

(3) If the application is rejected, a revised application may be submitted, and the Board will determine whether the resubmitted application conforms with all prescribed regulations. A properly revised application submitted within 60 days of the order rejecting the incomplete or improper application need not be subjected to new notice and publication under §1152.20, unless the defect causing the rejection was in the notice and/or publication. A revised application submitted after such 60-day

period must be newly published and noticed.

(4) The resubmission of an abandonment or discontinuance application shall be considered a de novo filing for the purposes of computation of the time period for filing an offer of financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. 10904, and for other time periods prescribed in the regulations contained in this part (49 CFR part 1152), provided, that a resubmitted application is deemed complete and proper.

(5) An applicant may seek waiver of specific regulations listed in subpart C of this part by filing a petition for waiver with the Board. A decision by the Director of the Office of Proceedings granting or denying a waiver petition will be issued within 30 days of the date the petition is filed. Appeals from the Director's decision will be decided by the entire Board. If waiver is not obtained prior to the filing of the application, the application may be subject to rejection under paragraphs (e) (1) and (2) of this section.

(f) As provided in §1152.29(e)(2), rail carriers authorized to abandon a line under 49 U.S.C. 10903 must file with the Board a notice that abandonment has been consummated.

[61 FR 67883, Dec. 24, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 34669, June 27, 1997; 64 FR 53268, Oct. 1, 1999; 74 FR 52909, Oct. 15, 2009; 84 FR 12945, Apr. 3, 2019]

§ 1152.25 Participation in abandonment or discontinuance proceedings.

(a) *Public participation*—(1) *Protests and comments.* Interested persons may become parties to an abandonment or discontinuance proceeding by filing written comments or protests with the Board. Any request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905 (§1152.28 of the Board's rules) and any request for a trail use condition under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (§1152.29 of the Board's rules) must be included in these filings. Persons who may oppose the abandonment or discontinuance, but who do not wish to participate fully in the process by appearing at any oral hearings or by submitting verified statements of witnesses containing detailed evidence, should file comments. Persons interested only in seeking public use or trail

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use conditions should also file comments. Persons opposing the proposed abandonment or discontinuance that do wish to participate actively and fully in the process should file a protest. Protests shall include all evidence and argument in support of protestant's position (protestant's case in chief). Protests must contain the following information:

(i) Protestant's name, address and business.

(ii) A statement describing protestant's interest in the proceeding including:

(A) A description of protestant's use of the line;

(B) If protestant does not use the line, information concerning the group or public interest it represents; and

(C) If protestant's interest is limited to the retention of service over a portion of the line, a description of the portion of the line subject to protestant's interest (with milepost designations if available) and evidence showing that the applicant can operate the portion of the line profitably, including an appropriate return on its investment for those operations.

(iii) Specific reasons why protestant opposes the application including information regarding protestant's reliance on the involved service (this information must be supported by affidavits of persons with personal knowledge of the fact(s)).

(iv) Any rebuttal of material submitted by applicant.

(v) Any request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905 (§1152.28 of the Board's rules) and any request for a trail use condition under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (§1152.29 of the Board's rules).

(2) *Additional information.* In addition to the information required in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, a commenting party or protestant may provide a statement of position and a summary of evidence regarding:

(i) Intent to offer financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. 10904;

(ii) Environmental impact;

(iii) Impact on rural and community development;

(iv) Recommended provisions for protection of the interests of employees;

(v) A request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905; and

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(vi) Prospective use of the right-of-way for interim trail use and rail banking under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) and 49 CFR 1152.29.

(3) *Feeder line application for all or part of the line subject to the abandonment application.* In addition to the information required in paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section, a commenting party or protestant must provide information that:

(i) The protestant filed a feeder line application under 49 U.S.C. 10907 (or former 49 U.S.C. 10910);

(ii) The feeder line application involves any portion of the rail line involved in the abandonment or discontinuance application;

(iii) The feeder line application was filed prior to the date the abandonment or discontinuance application was filed; and

(iv) The feeder line application is pending before the Board.

(b) *Employee or employee representative participation.* Employees or their representatives may file protests or comments to an application. However, because the Board will impose employee protective conditions under 49 U.S.C. 10903(b)(2) if an application is granted, employees and their representatives need not file comments or protests seeking this protection.

(c) *Filing and service of written comments, protests, along with evidence and argument, and replies.* (1) Written comments and protests, as well as public use and trail use requests, shall be filed with the Board (the Chief, Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423–0001) within 45 days of the filing with the Board of an abandonment or discontinuance application.

(2) A copy of each written comment or protest shall be served on applicant or its representative at the time of filing with the Board. If the applicant carrier is in bankruptcy, each comment or protest shall also be filed on the Bankruptcy Court. Each filing shall contain a certificate of service.

(3) Replies or rebuttal to written comments and protests shall be filed and served by applicants no later than 60 days after the filing of the application.

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(d) *Time limits.* (1) Pleadings, requests or other papers or documents (including any comments or protests and any appeal from a Board decision) required or permitted to be filed under this part must be received for filing at the Board's Offices at Washington, DC within the time limits, if any, for such filing. The date of receipt at the Board and not the date of deposit in the mail is determinative, provided, however, that if such document is mailed by certified, registered, or express mail, postmarked at least 3 days prior to the due date, it will be accepted as timely filed.

(2) In computing any time period prescribed or allowed by this part, the day of the act, event, or default after which the designated period of time begins to run is not to be included.

(3) Any filing under this part which falls due on a Saturday, Sunday, or a legal holiday in the District of Columbia, may be filed at the Board by the end of the next day which is neither a Saturday, Sunday, nor a holiday, except as indicated in paragraph (d)(4) of this section. A half holiday shall not be considered as a holiday.

(4) Offers of financial assistance made pursuant to §1152.27(c) must be filed on or before their statutory or regulatory due date as computed in paragraph (d)(2) of this section, regardless of whether that date is a Saturday, Sunday, or a legal holiday in the District of Columbia.

(5) The Board will reject any pleading filed after its due date unless good cause is shown why the pleading is filed late.

(6) *Oral hearings.* (i) Any oral hearing request is due 10 days after the filing of the application. The Board, through the Director of the Office of Proceedings, will issue a decision on any oral hearing request within 15 days after the filing of the application. If the Board decides to hold an oral hearing, the oral hearing shall be for the primary purpose of cross examination of witnesses filing verified statements in the proceeding. Any direct testimony, other than applicant's rebuttal evidence, shall be received at the discretion of the hearing officer.

(ii) In addition to that contained in the application, the submission of written evidence prior to the commence-

ment of the hearing shall be established by the Board.

(iii) Post hearing legal briefs shall be due 10 days after the close of the oral hearing, or at an earlier date if established at the hearing by the hearing officer.

(e) *Appellate procedures*—(1) *Scope of rule.* Except as specifically indicated below, these appellate procedures are to be followed in abandonment and discontinuance proceedings in lieu of the general procedures at 49 CFR 1115. Appeals of initial decisions of the Director of the Office of Proceedings determining:

(i) Whether offers of financial assistance satisfy the standard of 49 U.S.C. 10904(d) for purposes of instituting negotiations or, in exemption proceedings, for purposes of partial revocation and instituting negotiations;

(ii) Whether partially to revoke or to reopen abandonment exemptions authorized, respectively, under 49 U.S.C. 10502 and 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F for the purpose of imposing public use conditions under the criteria in 49 CFR 1152.28 and/or conditions limiting salvage of the rail properties for environmental and historic preservation purposes; and

(iii) The applicability and administration of the Trails Act [16 U.S.C. 1247(d)] in abandonment proceedings under 49 U.S.C. 10903 (and abandonment exemption proceedings), issued pursuant to delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1011.7(a)(2)(iv) and (v), will be acted on by the entire Board as set forth at 49 CFR 1011.2(a)(7). Any appeals, and replies to appeals, under this section must be filed with the Board.

(2) *Appeals criteria.* Appeals to the Board's decision in abandonment or discontinuance proceedings will not be entertained. Those decisions are administratively final upon the date they are served.

(i) Parties seeking further administrative action may file a petition to reopen the proceeding under paragraph (e)(4) of this section. If an abandonment or discontinuance is granted and a party wishes the Board to have the opportunity to consider a petition to reopen before the abandonment or discontinuance authorization becomes effective, it must file its petition within

15 days after the administratively final decision is served together with a request for a stay of effectiveness under paragraph (e)(7) of this section. If such a petition to reopen and stay request is received within that 15-day period, any replies to the petition to reopen must be filed no later than 25 days after the date the decision is served, and any reply to the stay request must reach the Board no later than 5 days after the stay request is filed.

(ii) The Board will grant a petition to reopen only upon a showing that the action would be affected materially because of new evidence, changed circumstances, or material error.

(3) *Form.* A petition to reopen and any reply shall not exceed 30 pages in length, including the index of subject matter, argument, and appendices or other attachments.

(4) *Petitions to reopen administratively final actions.* A person may file with the Board a petition to reopen any administratively final action of the Board. A petition to reopen shall state in detail the respects in which the proceeding involves material error, new evidence, or substantially changed circumstances.

(5) *Judicial review.* (i) Parties may seek judicial review of a Board action in an abandonment or discontinuance proceeding on the day the action of the Board becomes final.

(ii) If a petition seeking reopening is filed under this section, before or after a petition seeking judicial review is filed with the courts, the Board will act upon the petition after advising the court of its pendency unless action might interfere with the court's jurisdiction.

(6) *Petitions to vacate.* In the event of procedural defects (such as the loss of a properly filed protest, the failure of the applicant to afford the public the requisite notice of its proposed abandonment, etc.), the Board will entertain petitions to vacate the abandonment or discontinuance authorization. Any petitions to vacate must be filed with the Board.

(7) *Petitions to stay.* (i) The filing of a petition to reopen shall not stay the effect of a prior action. Any petition to stay must be filed with the Board.

(ii) A petition to reopen an administratively final action may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of the abandonment or discontinuance. As provided in paragraph (e)(2) of this section, a petition to reopen must be accompanied by a stay request if the party wishes the Board to have the opportunity to consider the petition to reopen before the abandonment or discontinuance authorization becomes final.

(iii) A party may petition for a stay of the effectiveness of abandonment or discontinuance authorization pending a request for judicial review. The reasons for the desired relief shall be stated in the petition, and the petition shall be filed not less than 15 days prior to the effective date of the abandonment authorization. No reply need be filed. If a party elects to file a reply, the reply must reach the Board no later than 5 days after the petition is filed.

[61 FR 67883, Dec. 24, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 34669, June 27, 1997; 74 FR 52909, Oct. 15, 2009; 84 FR 12945, Apr. 3, 2019]

§ 1152.26 Board determination under 49 U.S.C. 10903.

(a) The following schedule shall govern the process for Board consideration and decisions in abandonment and discontinuance application proceedings from the time the application is filed until the time of the Board's decision on the merits:

- Day 0—Application filed, including applicant's case in chief.
- Day 10—Due date for oral hearing requests.
- Day 15—Due date for Board decision on oral hearing requests.
- Day 20—Due date for Notice of Application to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.
- Day 45—Due date for protests and comments, including opposition case in chief, and for public use and trail use requests.
- Day 60—Due date for applicant's reply to opposition case and for applicant's response to trail use requests.
- Day 110—Due date for service of decision on the merits.
- Day 120—Due date for offers of financial assistance, except that if an application has been granted by decision issued sooner than Day 110, the offer of financial assistance shall be due 10 days after service of the decision granting the application.