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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

To: Brian Kalk	From: George Youngerman
Fax: 1-701-328-2410	Pages: One of 3
Phone:	Date: 11/30/2010
Re: Abandonment Exemption	CC:

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

● **Comments:**

Please review the attached letter in objection to the proposed abandonment of rail line in Rolette and Towner Counties, ND

3rd -

701.371.5255

4/11 - Mon 6/4/11



ROLLA JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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November 30, 2010

John A. Sims, CP
BNSF Railway Corp.
2500 Lou Menk Drive – AOB-3
Fort Worth, TX 76131-2828

Re: STB Docket No. jAB-6 (Sub-No. 473X) BNSF Railway Company
Abandonment Exemption – in Rolette and Towner Counties, North Dakota

Dear Mr. Sims:

Please understand that as a region of north-central North Dakota we certainly object to any actions BNSF might undertake to abandon the above state rail line. I understand that the Mayor of Rolla, ND has submitted an e-mail to you voicing his objections to this abandonment as well. Additionally, I have been in contact not only with the North Dakota Governor's Office on this issue but also with the North Dakota Public Service Commission and we are certainly open to communicating with the national Surface Transportation Board on this matter as well.

I would like to restate some of the issues relating to the rail service to this region:

- a. There is a short lines rail company willing to purchase or lease this line from BNSF! Why, if you no longer wish to operate this line, won't you consider this opportunity?
- b. Historically, the local elevator has shipped annually, on average, approximately 600 cars of grain from this area. A quantity that the short lines company deems worthy of development.
- c. Shipping the above grain by truck generates approximately 2,100 semi-truck loads out of Rolla each year, causing significant wear and tear on our streets and highways!
- d. In anticipation of economic development for our region, this office purchased approximately 27 acres of land contiguous to this rail line which we had anticipated offering to businesses that may wish to ship product from or to this area. Inasmuch as we do not have interstate or 4 lane highways serving our area, rail services have been an important tool for us to offer potentially new business to the area. A recent proposal received from the North Dakota Department of Commerce sites an out-of-state company wishing to expand to North Dakota and is looking for a site that had rail and labor. We have a Native American reservation located just 5 miles from this line and the unemployment rate on this reservation is approximately 60%. Now this proposed abandonment may keep us from reaching the "short list" of this company and consequently limiting any potential we may have for

growth. We certainly do not receive many of these opportunities and it is severely disheartening to think that with the abandonment we can no longer count on rail transportation for economic development of the region.

- e. A proposed wind farm development comprised of over 60 turbines is scheduled to start construction the Spring of 2011. They would have considered rail shipments for the turbines and related equipment.**

We would certainly respectfully request that BNSF not start the abandonment process to permanently take this important economic resource from this region.

Sincerely,



George Youngerman
Executive Director

Cc: ND Governor John Hoven
ND Public Service Commission

Faxed: November 30, 2010