



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423
Office of Environmental Analysis

February 22, 2018

Tarek Ravenel
Palmetto Railways
540 East Bay St
Charleston, SC 29403

Re: Docket No. FD 36095, Palmetto Railways – Petition for Exemption – In Berkeley County, South Carolina; Information Request #3

Dear Mr. Ravenel:

Consistent with 40 C.F.R. § 1506.5(a), we request the information listed below to assist the Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis in the environmental review in the above-referenced proceeding.

1. Comments submitted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control indicate Palmetto Railways has requested approval to use fly ash for construction of the railway embankment, particularly in the vicinity of the Diversion Canal. Please provide available information on the anticipated use of fly ash in construction of the proposed rail line.
2. Please provide a list of the types of commodities that Palmetto Railways anticipates would be carried on trains operating over the proposed rail line.
3. What type (Tier 1, 2, 3 or 4) of locomotives does Palmetto Railways anticipate using on the proposed rail line?
4. Please provide the estimated locomotive diesel fuel consumption per train round-trip on the proposed rail line.
5. Please provide the locations, in addition to the Diversion Canal, where Palmetto Railways anticipates that bridges would be constructed and indicate whether pile driving would be required at each location.
6. For any anticipated bridges, please indicate likely elevations.
7. For any anticipated bridges, please provide any design information available, or likely design information, including photos or drawings of a bridge or bridges with similar appearance.
8. If the proposed rail line were not to be constructed and operated, where would finished vehicles produced at the Volvo Cars plant and destined for domestic sale be trucked for subsequent transfer to rail?
9. Please provide the estimated duration of rail line construction.
10. Please provide the estimated average and maximum number of construction workers that would be employed to construct the rail line.
11. Is construction during nighttime hours (10 PM to 6 AM) anticipated?
12. Please identify likely construction staging areas, if known.

13. Are any project-related fixed lighting sources anticipated outside the commerce park other than proposed early warning signs on roadways and lights/flashers at grade crossings?
14. Please explain the source and rationale for the equipment utilization factors used for the construction noise assessment presented in Table 5-2 of Section 5 of Environmental Report Appendix C: Noise and Vibration Assessment.
15. Please provide additional methodology details and information on the Protected Species Assessment (i.e. Appendix D of the Environmental Report).
 - a. Please provide a map, and supporting GIS data, showing where biologists had access along the proposed rail route (i.e. show land parcels where access was granted and habitat physically surveyed within and adjacent to the rail corridor).
 - b. Please provide a map, and supporting GIS data, showing where biologists determined presence of suitable habitat for each species assessed.
 - c. The Protected Species Assessment indicates that suitable foraging habitat was observed adjacent to the project area; please provide a map, and supporting GIS data, showing the location and area (size) of this habitat. Please provide any additional available details on the red-cockaded woodpecker habitat survey results.
 - d. Please review the three attached maps from South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicating two areas they have determined to have potential suitable red-cockaded woodpecker habitat. Please indicate if Palmetto Railways had access to these two areas and if habitat was physically surveyed in these two areas as part of the Protected Species Assessment. If so, please provide details on the survey methodology and the results of the surveys in these two areas (e.g., transect location and spacing, species and age of trees, nesting or foraging habitat identified, etc.). If Palmetto Railways did not have access to these two areas, please provide details on the methodology that assessed these two areas to determine whether or not red-cockaded woodpecker foraging or nesting habitat was present.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please feel free to contact Diana Wood of my staff at 202-245-0302 or by email at Diana.Wood@stb.gov, if you have any questions. I would appreciate two copies of your response, one sent to Diana Wood at 395 E Street SW, Washington DC 20423 or by email at the above address, and one sent to David Bauer of ICF, our independent third-party consultant, at 9300 Lee Highway Fairfax, VA 22031 or by email at David.Bauer@icf.com. We look forward to receiving this information at your earliest convenience, but no later than March 9, 2018.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Director, Office of Environmental Analysis

cc: Elizabeth Williams, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers