

EI-17533

# FLETCHER & SIPPET LLC

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April 30, 2009

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Ms. Victoria J. Rutson, Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Attention: Danielle Gosselin

Re: **STB Finance Docket No. 35116**  
**R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Pennsylvania Lines, Inc. --**  
**Construction and Operation Exemption—Clearfield County, PA**

Dear Ms. Gosselin:

In response to Ms. Rutson's letter, on May 30, 2008, Petitioner R.J. Corman Railroad Company/Pennsylvania Lines, Inc. ("RJCP") filed its petition in this docket for exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 10901 for the re-construction of tracks and operation over the existing railway roadbed extending from a point of connection with RJCP at milepost 11.7 near Wallaceton (Wallaceton Junction) to milepost 22.5 (also referred to as NYC milepost 64.5) near Winburne, a distance of 10.8 miles (the "Western Segment"). During the public comment phase of SEA's Scoping analysis, a member of the public came forward with an alternate alignment for a portion of the Western Segment. RJCP has conducted a preliminary review of this alignment, and it appears that this alternative alignment would minimize certain environmental impacts of the proposed alignment and would not unduly burden rail construction and operation.

The alternative alignment utilizes about 7 miles of former Conrail right of way last referred to as the Philipsburg Industrial Track. This line extended south from Munson to a point near Philipsburg. Like the rest of the "Western Segment," the Philipsburg Industrial Track was also part of the "Clearfield Cluster" abandoned by Conrail in 1995 pursuant to ICC Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1146X). The alternative alignment follows the "Western Segment" west from Winburne to Munson, but then heads south over the former Philipsburg Industrial Track. At the southern end of the Philipsburg Industrial Track, a new 2500 foot connection would be constructed to RJCP's existing Wallaceton Subdivision line at milepost 24.62. The alternative alignment is shown in orange on the accompanying map.

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This alignment minimizes the environmental impact of the proposed reconstruction in several ways, including:

- Significantly fewer homes adjacent to the right of way
- 14 fewer public road crossings (19 reduced to 5)
- 11 fewer private drive crossings (12 reduced to 1)
- Fewer highway bridge reconstructions (2 reduced to 1)
- Slightly less reconstruction activity (8 miles from Wallaceton to Munson reduced to 7 miles from Philipsburg to Munson plus 1/2 mile new connecting track)

However, there is a partially offsetting incremental adverse impact: the 2,500 feet of new connecting track will impact some wetland areas and will require a new bridge over Laurel Run. In addition, some of the trackside drainage ditches along the Philipsburg Industrial Track may be sufficiently vegetated to be classified as jurisdictional wetlands by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Thus the socioeconomic, traffic, safety, noise and vibration benefits of the alternative alignment will be somewhat offset by increased wetland impacts.

From a commercial perspective, the alternate alignment provides rail service to at least one and likely several new shippers. Operationally, this alternative alignment would require approximately 4.5 miles of additional travel over RJCP's active Wallaceton Subdivision (i.e., Wallaceton Junction to milepost 24.62 outside Philipsburg) but the cost of that extra haul over an existing line will be offset by a slightly more favorable overall grade on the alternative alignment (1.58% grade reduced to 1.50%).

Because this alignment would significantly reduce the adverse impact of reactivating the line on those people whose homes are adjacent to the right of way, and because it is less disruptive to and safer for road traffic, RJCP would prefer to reactivate service on this alternative alignment, despite its increased wetlands impact.

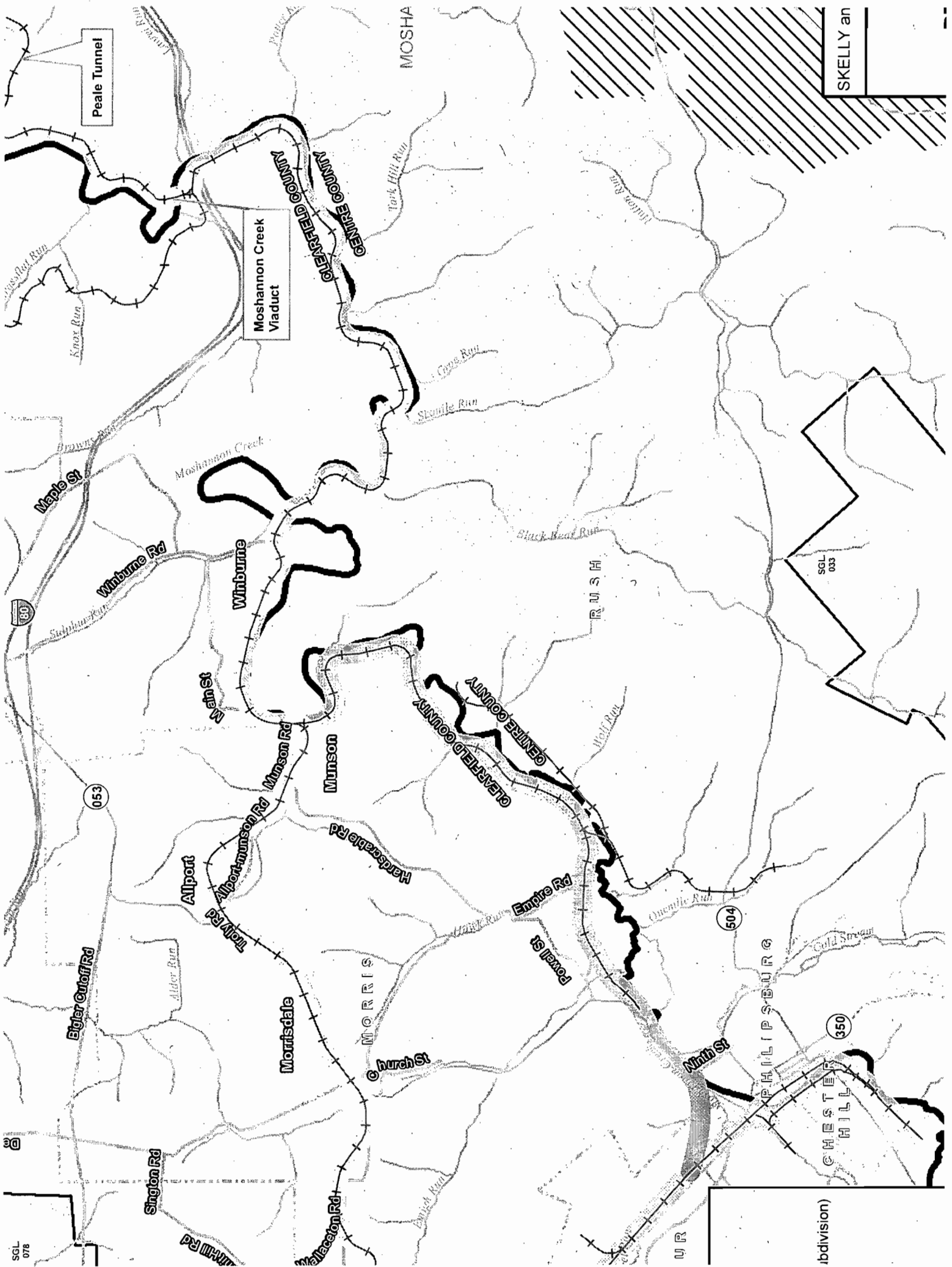
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. Also, Skelly and Loy is aware of this alignment and may be able to answer technical questions better than I can.

Very truly yours,



Ronald A. Lane

RAL/pj



Peale Tunnel

Moshannon Creek Viaduct

SKELLY an

SGL 033

SGL 078

(division)

MOSHA

RUSH

MORRIS

PHILIPPSBURG

CHESTER HILLS

UR

Maple St

Winburne Rd

Winburne

Main St

Munson

Alport

Morrisdale

Church St

Empire Rd

504

Ninth St

350

Sington Rd

Wagon Rd

Wallace Rd

60

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Alport Rd

Alport-Munson Rd

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Herscher Rd

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