

PORT BIENVILLE RAILROAD

COMBINED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND RECORD OF DECISION

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC HEARING MATERIALS

Prepared for:

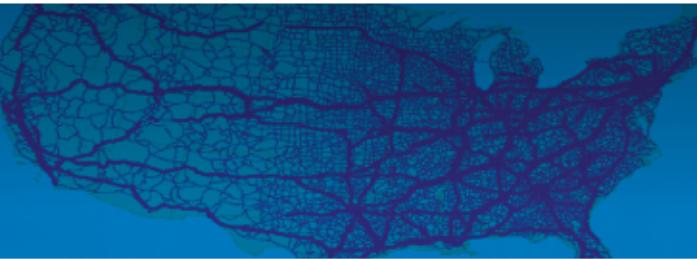


Federal Rail Administration



Mississippi Department of Transportation

This page intentionally left blank.



Economic Feasibility Study Findings

A new rail connection to a second major railroad would provide benefits such as:

- Existing businesses will be served by access to two major railroads.
- Improved rail transit times, rail service access, and reliability of deliveries.
- More competitive rail and multi-modal transportation costs.
- Manufacturing employment growth projected to increase 33.8% because of new rail connector over the next 25 years.**

Rail Transportation: An Economic Driver for Hancock & Pearl River Counties

- Existing businesses ship over \$1 billion by rail annually.
- Proposed 24-mile project would provide access to two Class 1 railroads, significantly improving rail service, reliability, and competitiveness for existing industries, as well as provide the opportunity for rail access to Stennis Space Center.
- Access to two Class 1 railroads is a key site location factor for many companies engaged in aerospace and aviation, automotive, logistics, and petrochemical manufacturing.
- Recent studies document access to multiple Class 1 railroads improves competitive transportation costs, access to more domestic and international markets, improved delivery reliability, and increased global trade opportunities.

Hancock & Pearl River Counties: A Powerhouse for Economic Development

Existing businesses would benefit from the expanded rail service allowing these employers to continue to grow and prosper in the region. Access to these two Class 1 railroads can provide transportation and economic resilience for this region of the Gulf Coast in the event of future natural disasters. This project helps to ensure Port Bienville and Stennis Space Center continue to play a pivotal role in the recovery and emergence of this region as an economic powerhouse.



Necessary Permits	
Impact or Action	Applicable Laws/Regulations
Wetlands/ Waters of the U.S.	Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)
Water Quality	Section 401 of the CWA
Stormwater	Section 402 of the CWA
Farmland	Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)
Threatened/ Endangered Species	Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973
Coastal Zone	Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972
Cultural Resources	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
Floodplain	National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP); Executive Orders 11988 and 11990

Why This Project Matters

Next Steps

- Revise the preferred alternative based on public comments
- Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision
- Identify funding sources for construction
- Final design
- Permitting
- Right-of-way acquisition
- Construction



Federal Railroad Administration

Port Bienville Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing

October 23, 2018



Your Comments are Important to Us!

Comments must be received by **November 5, 2018**.

- Complete and submit a comment sheet tonight or mail it later to the address noted on the comment sheet.
- Email your comments to environmentalcomments@mdot.ms.gov.
- Fax your comments to 601-359-7355.



The Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be viewed online at: <http://http://sp.mdot.ms.gov/Environmental/Pages/Projects.aspx> or at: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0798>

The Project

Project Study Team

Hancock County Ports and Harbor Commission secured a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Grant for the Port Bienville Rail Study. In a multi-agency coordination effort, the FRA and Mississippi Department of Transportation are working with cooperating agencies, which include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Surface Transportation Board

Project Purpose and Need

Port Bienville currently connects to CSX, which is located along the coast and serves as a primary east/west rail connection. The CSX rail line is located in the storm surge zone and has experienced significant service disruptions in the past due to natural disasters, limiting intermodal connections into and out of the Port and resulting in rail closures in the wake of these events. There is currently no north/south rail connection at the Port Bienville Industrial Park site. The proposed rail line would provide a north/south rail connection to Norfolk Southern (NS), providing an additional option for rail transport while being located out of harm's way, improving transportation and economic resilience for the entire region.

What is an EIS?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a procedural law that requires transportation officials to make decisions that balance engineering with social, economic, and natural environmental factors. During the NEPA process, a wide range of partners including the public, business, interest groups, and agencies at all levels of government, provide input into the process.

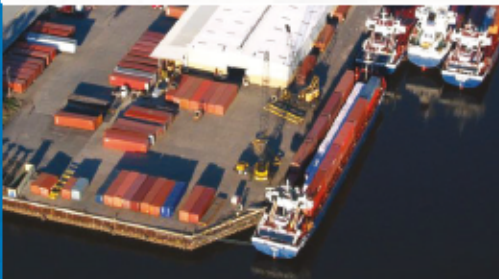
NEPA requires Federal agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major Federal actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. An EIS is a full disclosure document that details the process through a range of reasonable alternatives, the potential impact of alternatives, and compliance with applicable environmental laws. The EIS document consists of:

- A project description.
- A summary of potential effects on the environment.
- The purpose and need for the project.
- A summary of public involvement, input, and comments.
- An analysis of possible alternatives.
- A summary of coordination efforts with resource and regulatory agencies.
- Studies of the existing human and natural environment.
- Identification of a preferred alternative.

Project Purpose

Provide access to two major railroads:

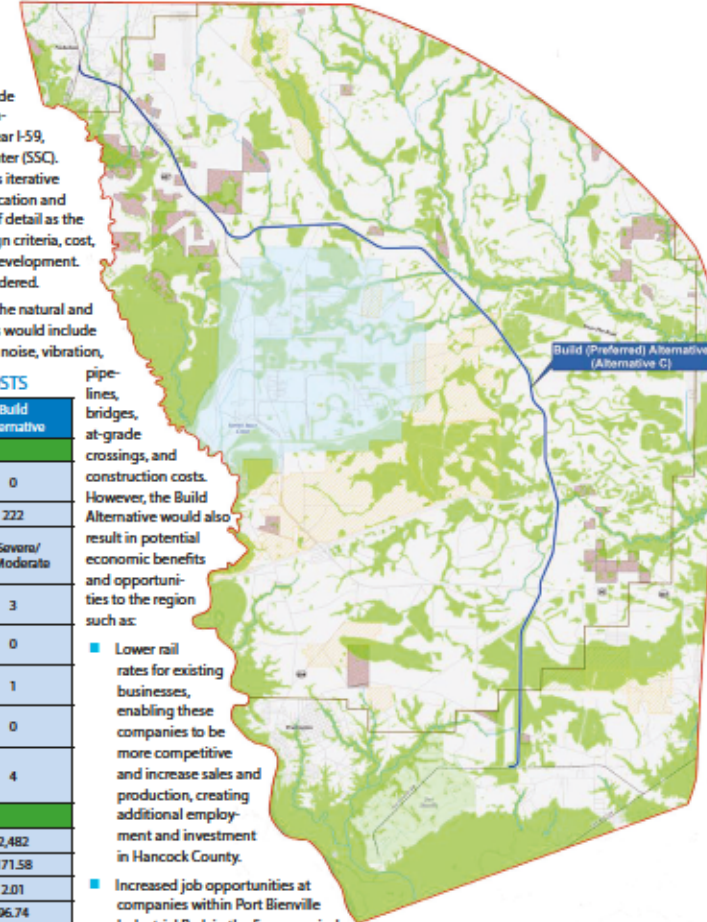
- Improve rail transport time and reliability.
- Improve economic opportunities.
- Provide flexibility/options during emergencies and coastal storms.



What Is the Preferred Alternative?

The Build Alternative has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, which includes the construction of a new proposed rail line, approximately 24 miles in length. The proposed rail line would provide a direct connection between the Port Bienville Railroad (PBRR) and the NS rail line near I-59, north of NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC). The alternatives development process was iterative in nature, providing a continuous quantification and comparison of impacts to an equal level of detail as the alternatives were modified based on design criteria, cost, and other considerations during Project development. Refer to the DEIS for the alternatives considered.

The Build Alternative would impact both the natural and human environment. The primary impacts would include streams, wetlands, farmlands, floodplains, noise, vibration,



pipe-lines, bridges, at-grade crossings, and construction costs. However, the Build Alternative would also result in potential economic benefits and opportunities to the region such as:

- Lower rail rates for existing businesses, enabling these companies to be more competitive and increase sales and production, creating additional employment and investment in Hancock County.
- Increased job opportunities at companies within Port Bienville Industrial Park in the 5-year period following the completion of the proposed PBRR to meet increased customer demand.
- Support additional employment and new investment in plants and equipment from existing businesses and the location of new companies that require or would benefit from access to dual Class 1 rail services.
- Allow businesses in the Port Bienville Industrial Park greater opportunities for increasing exports to some regions.

Upon signing of the Draft EIS, FRA published availability of the document for review in the Federal Register. FRA published the Draft EIS in the Federal Register on **September 21, 2018**. The Draft EIS is available for a 45-day public comment period, which will end on **November 5, 2018**. This public hearing provides interested citizens and businesses an opportunity to review the Build (Preferred) Alternative and provide comments on the Project. All comments received on the Project from the public and agencies will be addressed in the Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD).

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND COSTS

Impact Category (Units)	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT		
Cultural Resources (Sites)	N/A	0
Farmland (Acres)	N/A	222
Noise (No. of sensitive receptors)	N/A	2 Severe/ 12 Moderate
Vibration (No. of sensitive receptors)	N/A	3
Residential Relocations (No.)	0	0
Hazardous Materials (sites)	N/A	1
Business Relocations (No.)	0	0
Environmental Justice Impacted Census Blocks (No.)	N/A	4
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT		
Streams (LF)	N/A	2,482
Wetlands (Acres)	N/A	171.58
Other Waters (Acres)	N/A	2.01
Floodplains (Acres)	N/A	96.74
Threatened and Endangered Species (affect/impact)	N/A	7
ENGINEERING		
Gas Pipelines (Crossings No.)	N/A	8
Railroad Bridges Over Roadways (No.)	N/A	4
Railroad Bridges Over Streams (No.)	N/A	2
SAFETY AND MOBILITY		
At-Grade Crossings (No.)	N/A	22
COST ESTIMATE	N/A	\$108 million