

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
MOUNTAIN DIVISION RAILROAD LINE AND CONWAY BRANCH RAILROAD LINE
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (“Department”), through the Bureau of Rail & Transit, is seeking expressions of interest from entities (“Respondents”) that are interested in operating passenger or freight rail services on the State-owned Mountain Division Railroad Line (between Mile Post P51.13 in Conway at the Maine Border to Mile Post P111.57 in Lunenburg, Vermont) and/or the State-owned portions of the Conway Branch Railroad Line (between Mile Post B111.0 in Ossipee to Mile Post B132.35 at the Conway Town Line). The remainder of the Conway Branch Railroad Line is owned by NH Northcoast to the south and Conway Scenic Railroad to the north. See the charts below for more detailed information on each of these rail lines.

Mountain Division Rail Line conditions of note:

Conway Scenic Railroad (CSRR) is currently under agreement to the Department and has the exclusive right to operate tourist excursion trains between Mile Post P56.0 in Conway to Mile Post P101 in Whitefield. As CSRR is under agreement to the Department and provides seasonal tourist excursion train service, other potential operators shall be required to enter into a mutually acceptable agreement with CSRR regarding the terms and conditions relating to the use of rail facilities, including, without limitation, commercially reasonable terms and conditions relating to liability protection for CSRR and compensation due to CSRR relating to the use of the rail facilities. At all times CSRR’s service shall have priority over all other users and CSRR shall retain dispatching control of the Line.

NH Central Railroad (NHCRR) operates a freight train between Mile Post P101 in Whitefield to Mile Post P103.2 in Whitefield. Any proposed train movements through this portion of the Line must be covered by a mutual agreement with NHCRR, including train movements that are coordinated with NHCRR.

The tracks between Mile Post P51.13 and Mile Post P56.0 in Conway have not been used in many years and will require substantial track and drainage work before train service of any type can be restored. Additionally there is a lengthy bridge and trestle over the Saco River that will also require inspections and repairs prior to resumption of service.

The tracks between Mile Post P103.2 in Whitefield and Mile Post P111.57 in Lunenburg, VT have not been used in many years and will require substantial track and drainage work before train service can be restored. There is a long bridge over the Connecticut River and two short bridges over the Johns River that will need inspections and repairs.

State-Owned Mountain Division Railroad Line: Type of Rail & FRA Classification of the Line

Mile Post	-	Mile Post	Location Names	Rail Type	Classification
P51.13	-	P56.0	Maine Border to Redstone	85#	Inactive
P56.0	-	P61.0	Redstone to Mountain Junction	85#	Class I
P61.0	-	P76.5	Mountain Junction to Notchland	85#	Class II
P76.5	-	P85.0	Notchland to Crawford Station	100#	Class II
P85.0	-	P103.0	Crawford Station to Whitefield	85#	Class I
P103.0	-	P111.57	Whitefield to Lunenburg, VT	85#	Inactive

Conway Branch Rail Line conditions of note:

Privately-owned portions:

- Conway Scenic Railroad (CSRR) owns the line from Mile Post B132.35 at the Conway Town Line to Mile Post B139.6, which is the junction with the State-owned Mountain Division Railroad Line at Mile Post P61.0. NH Northcoast (NHNC) owns the line from Mile Post 70.0 in Rollinsford to Mile Post B111.0 in Ossipee. Any proposed train movements through the CSRR or NHNC owned portions of the line will require coordination with and trackage rights from CSRR and NHNC.
- Approximately 700 feet of track (Mile Post B126.2 to B126.3) is currently owned by the Silver Lake Railroad Station in Madison and any proposed train movements through this section will require approval of Silver Lake Railroad. (Note: The Department is currently working to obtain an easement through this section, but has yet to do so.)

State-owned portions:

- The State-owned portions of the tracks, as identified in the table below, have not been used in many years and will require substantial track, drainage and bridge work before any train service can be restored.
- The State’s purchase of the Conway Branch, mileage noted below, included a provision that grants Boston and Maine Railroad a perpetual exclusive freight rail transportation easement and therefore Respondents that propose freight rail service on this line would be required to contact Boston & Maine Corporation to discuss their deeded right. (A copy of the deed for the Conway Branch has been made available for Respondents to review)

Conway Branch Railroad Line: Type of Rail, Track Status & Ownership

Mile Post	-	Mile Post	Location Names	Rail Type	Ownership	Status
B70.0	-	B111.0	Rollinsford to Route 28 in Ossipee	100#	NH Northcoast RR	Active (washout at MP B108.6-109.3)
B111.0	-	B118.6	Route 28 in Ossipee to Ossipee Main Street	75#-85#	State of NH	Inactive
B118.6	-	B126.2	Ossipee Main Street to Silver Lake Station in Madison	75#	State of NH	Inactive
B126.2	-	B126.3	Silver Lake Station in Madison	75#	Silver Lake Station	Inactive
B126.3	-	B130.6	Silver Lake Station to Approximately 1 mile south of Rt 113	75#	State of NH	Inactive
B130.6	-	B131.9	Approximately 1 mile south of Rt 113 to Rt 113	none	State of NH	Track out - Inactive
B131.9	-	B132.35	Rt 113 to Conway Town Line	75#	State of NH	Inactive
B132.35	-	B138.5	Conway Town Line to West of Saco River Bridge	75#	Conway Scenic RR	Active
B138.5	-	B139.6	West of Saco River Bridge to Mountain Division Line (Mile Post P61.0)	85#	Conway Scenic RR	Active

Note: Information provided is to the best of the Department’s knowledge, but Respondents may want to verify above information for privately-owned rail miles.

Purpose & Process:

The purpose of this announcement is to gather information and gauge the interest level from the private sector (Respondents) on the potential rail use of the State-owned portions of the Mountain Division Railroad Line and the Conway Branch Railroad Line and for the State to determine if a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) should be developed for either or both lines.

Respondents that submit a formal Expression of Interest, in accordance with submittal requirements outlined below, may request to present their proposal to the Department. Respondents must submit a presentation request via email to the RFI Coordinator by February 20, 2015. Presentations will be scheduled by the Department and occur on or before March 13, 2015. Presentations will be limited to one hour and all presentation costs incurred by the Respondent shall be borne by the Respondent.

After a review of the RFI responses, including any scheduled presentations, and an assessment of the marketplace for commercial rail service on the lines, the Department may choose to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). Participation in the RFI process is not a requirement for any subsequent competitive procurement, although the results of this RFI may be used to build and refine an RFP. The Department reserves the right to refrain from issuing an RFP or any other formal solicitation document for these State-owned lines. This RFI is not a formal solicitation and no contract will be awarded as a result. If an RFP is issued, the Department will outline specific requirements that the Respondent(s) must meet to obtain an Operating Agreement from the Department.

Some assumed conditions and requirements that may be included in a competitive solicitation include, but are not limited to:

- There is currently no State or Federal funding available for the restoration of the lines and all costs to be borne for improvements and repairs, including but not limited to the tracks, drainage, signals, and bridges, shall be the responsibility of a selected contractor/operator.
- The selected contractor/operator would be responsible for all infrastructure improvements noted above, as well as, other costs including operations startup and capital equipment needs.
- Due to the scope of the required track reconstruction to reactivate portions of these lines, the Department will require that the selected contractor/operator pay the cost of engineering inspectors, assigned or approved by the Department. Engineering inspectors will approve, direct, and oversee the proposed work on behalf of the Department.
- As the track owner, the Department reserves the right to render the final determination on any modifications to the State-owned rail corridor and what will be required for its restoration.
- Any proposed train movements that would require connectivity with railroad lines that are not owned by the State of New Hampshire would require trackage rights agreements to be obtained from connecting railroad owners.
- Any freight service proposed to operate on the State-owned portion of the Conway Branch Railroad Line would require approval from Boston & Maine Corporation, in accordance with the aforementioned exclusive freight rail transportation easement they retain.

RFI Schedule

Release RFI	January 15, 2015
Respondents' Questions due by 3pm EST	February 2, 2015
Addenda (response to questions) issued by Department online by 3pm EST	February 10, 2015
Respondents' Expressions of Interest Due by 3pm EST	February 19, 2015
Respondents' Request to present their proposal Due by 3pm EST	February 20, 2015
Requested presentations will be scheduled on or before	March 13, 2015

RFI Coordinator

Respondent's communications concerning this RFI should be directed to the RFI Coordinator listed below:

RFI Coordinator	Brian Lombard, Railroad Operations Engineer
Address	NH Department of Transportation Bureau of Rail & Transit PO Box 483 Concord, NH 03302-0483
Email	BLombard@dot.state.nh.us

Response Preparation Instructions:

- Submissions of interest shall include basic information about the type of service proposed, the railroad line or lines proposed to be used, and the approximate mileage the Respondent is interested in providing said service on (as identified by mile markers), a brief description of the relevant experience and capability of the Respondent, and basic information on the financing for the proposed service and infrastructure improvements.
 - If proposed service requires connections to non-State of NH-owned rail lines, please provide a status of the support for the proposed service from connecting railroad owners or, at a minimum, a plan of how you would work with connecting railroad owners.
- Submissions of interest shall include a statement of whether or not the Respondent is (a) a railroad corporation organized under the laws of New Hampshire pursuant to [NH RSA 367](#) or whether the Respondent is a railroad corporation under the laws of any other state, and (b) approved by the Federal Railroad Administration to operate the type of proposed service.
 - Respondents that do not meet the criteria set forth under (a) or (b) above shall submit a statement of the reasons why (a) or (b) is inapplicable to the Respondent or a statement of the steps it has taken to date to comply with said criteria.
- Expressions of interest shall be limited to no more than six (6) pages.
 - Electronic and paper submissions are acceptable
 - If paper copies are submitted they should be double-sided & stapled
- Responses to this RFI should be submitted to the RFI Coordinator no later than 3pm EST on February 19, 2015.
 - Expressions of interest received after the due date will not be considered.
 - The RFI Coordinator *may* email an acknowledgement of receipt to the submitting Respondents.

Additional Information:

- Respondents may respond as independent companies, corporations, or as individuals.
- All materials submitted in response to this RFI, including during scheduled presentations, become the property of the Department and the Department has the right to use any of the ideas presented in any response to the RFI.
 - Any information submitted in the response that is proprietary or confidential must be clearly designated as such. The Department will honor requests for confidentiality for information of a proprietary nature to the extent permitted by law. Marking of the entire submission as proprietary or confidential will be rejected as non-responsive.
- Respondents may submit comments and questions to the RFI Coordinator prior to responding to the RFI by the date indicated on the RFI schedule contained herein. Responses to Respondents' questions will be considered addendums to the RFI and any addenda will be published on the Bureau of Rail & Transit's website (<http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/aerorailtransit/railandtransit/index.htm>) by the date indicated on the RFI schedule contained herein.

Materials and Information that may be of interest to Respondents include:

- [Conway Branch Railroad Line Feasibility Study \(June 30, 2004\)](#)
- State of NH's deed for the Conway Branch (includes Boston & Maine Corporation's perpetual exclusive freight rail transportation easement)-This is posted on the [NHDOT Rail & Transit webpage](#) as part of the RFI posting
- Railroad Valuation Maps for Mountain Division and Conway Branch
 - Available, for a fee, upon request from the Bureau of Rail & Transit
 - Contact Rail Planner Lou Barker (603-271-2425 or lbarker@dot.state.nh.us) to schedule a time to review the Valuation maps or to purchase copies