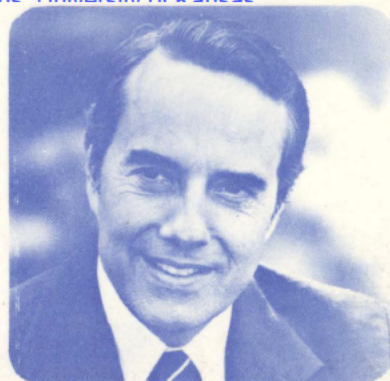


News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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PURCHASE OF ROCK ISLAND TRACK BY HEALTHY RAILROADS HOLDS KEY TO CONTINUED KANSAS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- The only way to ensure continued service to Kansas communities served by the Rock Island Railroad is to encourage healthy railroads to purchase portions of the Rock Island, Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said today.

"The Interstate Commerce Commission's directed service ends on March 2," Dole said. "It is uncertain how communities on the Rock will be served after that date. The Rock Island Railroad itself does not have the funds to serve Kansas. The ICC is hesitant to approve an additional 90 days of directed service, which would only delay real solutions. The trustee of the bankrupt Rock Island line has proposed a 'core plan' to the ICC for approval which would eliminate all service in Kansas. That leaves only one viable answer -- purchase of the Rock Island by healthy railroads."

The Rock Island Railroad owns over 1,000 miles of track in Kansas, which have been running 50 trains per day. "Continuation of service on that track is critical to maintain service to dozens of communities dependent on the Rock for agricultural and industrial shipping," Dole said. "The economic well-being of these communities will be seriously damaged if rail service is not continued."

Dole said he has been in contact with several railroads that express interest in portions of the Rock Island. The Southern Pacific is awaiting ICC action on its proposal to purchase track from Liberal to Kansas City, including the branch line to Dodge City. The Denver & Rio Grande, along with several others, is closely studying the purchase of track from the Colorado border near Goodland to Kansas City, via Belleville and Topeka. The Burlington Northern is interested in the line from Atchison to Topeka. Finally, the Katy is considering purchasing track from Topeka to the Oklahoma border via Herrington and Wichita. Undoubtedly, other railroad companies are also considering purchases.

"I am working with representatives of these railroads, along with officials at the Interstate Commerce Commission, Department of Transportation, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and shippers and civic leaders from throughout Kansas to see that every possible step is taken to induce these railroads to make firm offers to purchase portions of Rock Island track," Dole said. "I am sure I speak for the entire Kansas delegation in saying that we are prepared to work with government agencies or introduce legislation to enable these purchases."

Sen. Dole encourages all communities with an interest in continued service over the Rock Island to make their views known to the railroads interested in serving their area, as well as the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Railroad Administration. He also urges Kansans to participate in hearings being held throughout the state in early February by the Kansas Department of Transportation to solicit the public's views.

"We must make our voices heard if we are to keep our railroads," he said.