

§7154. Acquisition of railroads

1. Authorization to acquire. Upon forwarding the report set forth in section 7153 and if the report recommends acquisition of the railroad line by the department, the department may acquire, as provided in this section, the railroad line and associated real property located in the State and personal property, including rail facilities such as equipment and rolling stock, when, in the judgment of the department, acquisition of the railroad line is necessary to protect the public interest.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

2. Federal regulation. If the railroad line is under the exclusive jurisdiction of a federal regulatory agency, the department shall petition that agency and take all steps necessary to obtain all regulatory approvals required under federal law to acquire the railroad line.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

3. Acquisition. Upon obtaining all necessary federal regulatory approvals or if approval of a federal regulatory agency is not required, the department may acquire the railroad line and associated property by purchase or the taking by eminent domain.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

4. Limitation. Any acquisition under this section is subject to sufficient funds being made available by legislative act to acquire the railroad line.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

5. Eminent domain. In the event that the department decides to acquire the railroad line by condemnation, the department shall have the railroad line and associated property appraised and offer to the owner as just compensation the constitutional minimum value, which shall be not less than the net liquidation value or the value as a going concern, whichever is greater, but shall not include the cost of providing a protective arrangement concerning the interest of the railroad's employees.

The department shall file in the registry of deeds for the county or counties, or registry district or districts, where the railroad line is located a notice of condemnation which shall contain a description of the property and the interest taken and the name or names of the owner or owners of record as far as they can be reasonably determined. The department may join in the same notice one or more separate properties whether in the same or different ownership. A check in the amount of the offer and a copy of the notice of condemnation shall be served on the owner or owners of record. If there is multiple ownership, the check may be served on any one of the owners of each separate property. The notice of condemnation shall be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the property is located and that publication shall constitute service on any unknown owner or owners or other persons who may have or claim an interest in the property.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

6. Appeals. In the event that any owner or owners of record are aggrieved by the department's offer, they may appeal from it to the Kennebec County Superior Court within 30 days after the date of service or publication of the notice of condemnation. The appeal shall be taken by filing a complaint setting forth the facts upon which the case shall be tried according to the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure. The Superior Court shall determine compensation by a jury verdict or, if all parties agree, by the court without a jury or by a referee or referees and shall render judgment for any compensation, with interest when it is due, and for costs in favor of the party entitled to them, pursuant to just compensation standards set forth in subsection 5.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

7. Use of railroad line. The department may lease the railroad line, or otherwise contract for operation of the railroad line, to a railroad operator who is a financially responsible person, or it may hold and manage the railroad line for future transportation use.

[PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 748 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 398, §7 (RPR).

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