

Date: June 2, 1995.

Stephen R. Gibson,

*Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs,
Office of Mexican Affairs.*

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[Public Notice 2218]

**New International Railroad Bridge,
Laredo, Texas: Finding of No
Significant Impact**

SUMMARY: The Department of State is issuing a finding of no significant impact on the environment for the new international railroad bridge project sponsored by the Union Pacific Railroad/Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. A draft environmental assessment of the proposed Laredo international railroad bridge project was prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. of Omaha, Nebraska for the Presidential Permit applicant, Union Pacific Railroad/Missouri Pacific Railroad Company (Union Pacific Railroad Company), under the guidance and supervision of the Department of State. A Public Notice regarding the availability for inspection of the Union Pacific Railroad Company's Permit application and the draft environmental assessment was published in the **Federal Register** on April 7, 1994, at 59 FR 16682. No comments were received from the public.

Over 20 federal and state agencies reviewed the draft environmental assessment. All comments received from these agencies were responded to, either by expanding the analysis contained in the draft environmental assessment or by proposing mitigation measures, as appropriate. Additionally, the Permit applicant corresponded and met with several agencies to discuss ways of meeting their concerns and, where appropriate, to discuss mitigation measures. The outcome of this dialogue was recorded in correspondence. Agencies participating in this process were the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Customs Service, Food and Drug Administration, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, General Services Administration, International Boundary and Water Commission—U.S. Section, Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of State, and the

appropriate Texas State agencies—Parks and Wildlife Department, Department of Transportation, Historical Commission, Railroad Commission, South Texas Development Council and Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The draft environmental assessment, the comments submitted by the agencies, the response to these comments, and all correspondence between the agencies and the Permit applicant addressing the agencies' concerns, together, constitute the final environmental assessment.

Based on the final environmental assessment and information developed during the review of the Company's application and of the draft environmental assessment, the Department has concluded that issuance of the Permit will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment within the United States. In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, 40 CFR 1501.4 and 1508.13, and with State Department Regulations, 22 CFR 161.8(c), an environmental impact statement will therefore not be prepared.

A Finding of No Significant Impact was adopted on May 5, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Finding of No Significant Impact may be obtained from Stephen R. Gibson, Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs, Office of Mexican Affairs, Room 4258, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520 (Telephone 202-647-8529).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department of State is charged with issuance of Presidential Permits for the construction of international bridges under the International Bridge Act of 1972, 86 Stat. 731; 33 U.S.C. 535 *et seq.*, and Executive Order 11423, 33 FR 11741 (1968), as amended by Executive Order 12847 of May 17, 1993, 58 FR 29511 (1993).

Union Pacific Railroad Company, Texas, requested from the Department of State a Permit to build a new railroad bridge between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, a project which will include the construction of rail lines in both countries to connect the new bridge to existing mainline tracks. The proposed railroad bridge will be located 6.5 miles northwest of the existing international railroad bridge crossing at Laredo, at about mile 367.97 on the Rio Grande. The work involves the construction of approximately 1.7 miles of new track on the United States side; the construction of a 1,169-foot bridge spanning the Rio Grande and the border; and the construction of 8.95 miles of new track

in Mexico. It is expected that the new rail bridge will:

- Eliminate about 90 percent of Union Pacific rail traffic from downtown Laredo;
- Reduce inconvenience to the public due to blocked crossings; and
- Allow for anticipated future rail traffic growth generated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Earthwork and grading for the project will be designed and constructed to permit the operation of a double mainline track. However, the second mainline will be constructed in the future as demand increases. The proposed rail corridor will be between 200 and 400 feet wide, with the additional width required for construction of the curved transition into the existing tracks.

The corridor will traverse undeveloped land and will not require purchase or relocation of any homes or businesses.

Dated: June 2, 1995.

Stephen R. Gibson,

*Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs,
Office of Mexican Affairs.*

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[Public Notice 2221]

**Overseas Schools Advisory Council;
Notice of Re-Scheduling of Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Overseas Schools Advisory Council of the Department of State has been re-scheduled for Thursday, July 20, 1995 in room 6320, Department of State, 2201 C Street NW., Washington, D.C. at 9:30 a.m. For details of the meeting please refer to the announcement which appeared in the Federal Register, Public Notice 2185, published on Thursday, April 6, 1995, Volume 60, Number 66.

If you need further information, please contact the office of Dr. Ernest N. Mannino, Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, SA-29, Room 245, Washington, D.C. 20522-2902, telephone 703-875-7800.

Dated: June 5, 1995.

Ernest N. Mannino,

*Executive Secretary, Overseas Schools
Advisory Council.*

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