

draft standards be required for Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) applications only; for both CVO and Electronic Toll and Traffic Management (ETTM) applications; or for CVO, ETTM, and additional applications?

The FHWA must continue to meet schedules for deployment of ITS projects using DSRC as the communications medium. Our understanding is that at least two competing products exist that comply with the open architecture of ASTM draft #6. On the other hand, it is also our understanding that the European standard (CEN) is not used in any products available in the United States that use the 902–928 MHz spectrum. To disrupt the project schedules could have a severely detrimental effect on the ITS program. Although we desire to minimize any detrimental effect on the program, we also understand the need of the industry to set the DSRC standards. Our strongest desire is for standards to be set that will best serve the users and the industry. It is not our intention to institute a standards process that would not be agreeable to the industry and users.

(2) Should the FHWA require that DSRC systems purchased with Federal-aid highway funds and ITS Federal funds meet an escalating interoperability formula? An example would be that first, all CVO applications must be nationally interoperable; second, all new (after specified date) and upgrading ETC systems must be interoperable with CVO applications; third, all other new (after specified date) and upgrading DSRC applications must be interoperable with CVO applications?

Nationwide interoperability is critical for the efficient operation of vehicles using DSRC equipment transiting the nation, especially commercial vehicles. As such, it is imperative that CVO programs be built with a national focus. ETC programs, on the other hand, are focused on regional travel, and its customers may not be very concerned about interoperability outside the local travel area, with exception to commercial carriers. The same regional emphasis may hold true with other DSRC applications, like in-vehicle signing or transit vehicle signal priority, parking payments, and traffic network performance monitoring. It may not be practical to immediately hold all users of DSRC equipment to a single national standard. Instead, a course of action to achieve national interoperability may be to include a migration plan that requires CVO applications to adhere to a national DSRC standard, followed by DSRC applications with regional emphasis. A —best fit— date can be specified for

new and upgrading regional projects to begin adherence with the national standard.

(3) Should a single standard be developed for all DSRC applications, or should separate standards be developed with an assumption that trucks and buses, and perhaps other users, would likely require separate technology to perform those functions?

The FHWA recognizes that CVO and ETTM applications, as well as other DSRC applications, have different requirements that have also shaped the design and operation of the equipment. While it may be desirable to have a single standard, it may not be practical. The FHWA is requesting comments on whether the agency should pursue the single standard approach, encourage the development of dual standards (one for the short term and one for the long term), or sponsor dual standards for the short term and pursue single standards for the next generation of DSRC?

The FHWA is looking to the industry and users to come to some agreement as to DSRC standards for both the short term (1–3 years) and the long term (4–10 years). The FHWA has demonstrated its willingness to assist in this process by funding standards development organizations for this purpose. The solution to this problem must be sought together through a team effort by all of the stakeholders. The successful implementation of the ITS model deployments is not possible without a demonstrated willingness on the part of all parties to seek a solution through the established standard setting processes. The FHWA has further demonstrated its willingness to pursue a solution by funding a contractor to meet one-on-one with purchasers and manufacturers of DSRC equipment to develop a concept of operations, a migration plan, and a draft memorandum of agreement between purchasers of DSRC equipment. The FHWA has also been participating in all discussions sponsored by ITS America that have been taking place between users and manufacturers. We are now looking for the industry to do its part. The FHWA would prefer that the industry set the necessary standards through the consensus building process that the FHWA is sponsoring. In the meantime, the FHWA is seeking comments on how it can most effectively administer the ITS programs, that rely on DSRC systems, without the necessary standards in place.

Authority: Pub. L. 102–240, § 6053(b) (as codified at 23 U.S.C. 307 note); 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: December 24, 1996.

Rodney E. Slater,

Federal Highway Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97–172 Filed 1–3–97; 8:45 am]

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Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB–488X]

Ludington & Northern Railway, Inc.— Abandonment Exemption—in Mason County, MI

Ludington & Northern Railway, Inc. (L&N) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon its entire line of railroad from the south line of Michigan Highway 116 in Hamlin Township south and east through Pere Marquette Township to terminus in the city of Ludington, in Mason County, MI, a distance of 2.54 miles.

L&N has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

Where, as here, the carrier is abandoning its entire line, the Board does not normally impose labor protection under 49 U.S.C. 10505(g) unless the evidence indicates the existence of a corporate affiliate that will: (1) continue rail operations; or (2) realize significant benefits in addition to being relieved of the burden of deficit operations by its affiliated railroad. See *T and P Railway-Abandonment-in Shawnee, Jefferson and Atchison Counties, KS*, Docket No. AB–381, *et. al.* (ICC served Apr. 27, 1993). Because these conditions do not appear to exist here, employee protection conditions will not be imposed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on February 5, 1997, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do

not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29³ must be filed by January 16, 1997. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by January 27, 1997, with: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Thomas F. McFarland, Jr., Attorney for Ludington & Northern Railway, Inc., McFarland & Herman, 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1330, Chicago, IL 60606-2902.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

L&N has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by January 10, 1997. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 3219, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling Elaine Kaiser, Chief of SEA, at (202) 927-6248. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Decided: December 30, 1996.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary.

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BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

² See *Exempt. of Rail Abandonment—Offers of Finan. Assist.*, 4 I.C.C.2d 164 (1987).

³ The Board will accept late-filed trail use requests as long as the abandonment has not been consummated and the abandoning railroad is willing to negotiate an agreement.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Fiscal Service

[Dept. Circ. 570, 1996 Rev., Supp. No. 4]

Surety Companies Acceptable on Federal Bonds, American Interstate Insurance Company

A Certificate of Authority as an acceptable surety on Federal Bonds is hereby issued to the following company under Sections 9304 to 9308, Title 31, of the United States Code. Federal bond-approving officers should annotate their reference copies of the Treasury Circular 570, 1996 Revision, on page 34283 to reflect this addition:

American Interstate Insurance Company. BUSINESS ADDRESS: 1807 Highway 190 West, DeRidder, Louisiana, 70634-6005. PHONE: (318) 463-9052. UNDERWRITING LIMITATION b/: \$2,578,000. SURETY LICENSES c/: AR, GA, IN, KY, LA, ME, MN, MS, PA, SC, SD, TX, VA, WI, WY. INCORPORATED IN: Louisiana.

Certificates of Authority expire on June 30 each year, unless revoked prior to that date. The Certificates are subject to subsequent annual renewal as long as the companies remain qualified (31 CFR, Part 223). A list of qualified companies is published annually as of July 1 in Treasury Department Circular 570, with details as to underwriting limitations, areas in which licensed to transact surety business and other information.

The Circular may be viewed and downloaded through the Internet (<http://www.ustreas.gov/treasury/bureaus/finman/c570.html>) or through our computerized public bulletin board system (FMS Inside Line) at (202) 874-6887. A hard copy may be purchased from the Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC, telephone (202) 512-1800. When ordering the Circular from GPO, use the following stock number: 048-000499-7.

Questions concerning this Notice may be directed to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, Funds Management Division, Surety Bond Branch, 3700 East-West Highway, Room 6F04, Hyattsville, MD 20782, telephone (202) 874-7116.

Dated: December 23, 1996.

Charles F. Schwan III,
Director, Funds Management Division,
Financial Management Service.

[FR Doc. 97-95 Filed 1-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-35-M

Internal Revenue Service

[IA-17-90]

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Regulation Project

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning an existing final regulation, IA-17-90 (TD 8571), Reporting Requirements for Recipients of Points Paid on Residential Mortgages (§§ 1.6050H-1 and 1.6050H-2).

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before March 7, 1997 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue Service, room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection should be directed to Carol Savage, (202) 622-3945, Internal Revenue Service, room 5569, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Reporting Requirements for Recipients of Points Paid on Residential Mortgages.

OMB Number: 1545-1380.

Regulation Project Number: IA-17-90

Abstract: These regulations require the reporting of certain information relating to payments of mortgage interest. Taxpayers must separately state on Form 1098 the amount of points and the amount of interest (other than points) received during the taxable year on a single mortgage and must provide to the payer of the points a separate statement setting forth the information being reported to the IRS.

Current Actions: There is no change to this existing regulation.

Type of Review: Extension of OMB approval.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 37,644.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 7 hrs. 31 min.