

proposed improvement would involve the construction of approximately 10.5 kilometers (km) of roadway (7.9 km on new alignment and 2.6 km on existing TH 371) from 0.8 km north of the entrance to Crow Wing State Park to the existing intersection of TH 371 and TH 210 in Baxter, Minnesota. Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand. Also included in this proposal is a new crossing over the Mississippi River. The Tier I EIS has been completed, resulting in a preferred location. The Tier I EIS was published, reviewed, comments were addressed, and a Record of Decision issued.

The Tier II EIS will include work accomplished for the Tier I EIS by reference and expand into several special studies, specific mitigation and detail design issues. The Tier II EIS will examine design alternatives for the South Extension, the junction of County State Aid Highway 48 and the bridge over the Mississippi River.

Coordination has been initiated and will continue with appropriate Federal, State and local agencies and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in the proposed action.

Public meetings have been held in the past and will continue to be held, with public notice given for the time and place of the meetings. To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: May 5, 1997.

Stanley M. Graczyk,

Project Development Engineer, Federal Highway Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[FRA Docket No. H-97-1]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR),

notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received from the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) a request for waiver of compliance with certain requirements of 49 CFR part 213: Track Safety Standards.

The purpose of Amtrak's petition is to secure approval from FRA to operate a test train at speeds up to 135 mph between County (MP 34) and MP 54, 1.7 miles east of Ham (MP 55.7) on the Metropolitan Division of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor in the spring of 1997. Amtrak currently operates trains at 125 mph under waiver in this track segment. To conduct this testing, Amtrak seeks relief from the requirements of 49 CFR Section 213.9, which limits maximum permissible train speeds to 110 mph. The schedule for the testing has not been finalized, but will be limited to a few days depending upon weather conditions.

In preparation for operating the new high-speed trainsets between New York City, New York, and Washington, D.C., Amtrak needs to evaluate the high-speed dynamic forces on pantograph assemblies in a configuration similar to the new trainsets. In order to perform this evaluation, Amtrak requests to operate a test train consisting of two AEM-7 electric locomotives and six Amfleet cars, including Amtrak's Track Geometry Car.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number H-97-1) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at FRA's temporary docket room located at 1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 7051, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on May 7, 1997.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[FRA Docket No. H-97-3]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received from the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) a request for waiver of compliance with certain requirements of 49 CFR part 213: Track Safety Standards.

The purpose of Amtrak's petition is to secure approval from FRA to operate its Talgo trains at higher cant deficiencies in the Pacific Northwest. Amtrak, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have joined together on a program to reduce trip times of Talgo trains between Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, and between Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Talgo trains with tilting passenger cars provide increased comfort at higher cant deficiencies. These trains have been in use since 1979 on the Spanish National Railway at seven inches of cant deficiency. The trains have also been tested under previous waivers granted by FRA, including testing at 5.5 inches of cant deficiency in 1994 on the former Southern Pacific route north of St. Louis, Missouri, and in 1988 at up to 8 inches of cant deficiency conducted for the Coalition of Northeastern Governors.

Title 49 CFR Section 213.57(b) prescribes a speed limit not distinguishing between freight and passenger rolling stock at which trains may operate over curved track as a function of curve radius (curvature) and installed superelevation.

In general, for any combination of curvature and superelevation, there is a specific ("balanced") speed at which the effect of centrifugal force is canceled. The track standards permit the operation of trains on curves at speeds producing a conservative underbalance ("cant deficiency") in line with historic industry practice. The track safety standards also permit a maximum of three inches of cant deficiency;