awarness of, and participation in, this aspect of FAA's regulatory activities. Neither publication of this notice nor the inclusion or omission of information in the summary is intended to affect the legal status of any petition or its final disposition.

DATES: Comments on petitions received must identify the petition docket number involved and must be received on or before February 26, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments on any petition in triplicate to: Federal Aviation Administration, Office of the Chief Counsel, Attn: Rule Docket (AGC–200), Petition Docket No. _____, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20591.

Comments may also be sent electronically to the following internet address: 9–NPRM–CMTS@faa.dot.gov.

The petition, any comments received, and a copy of any final disposition are filed in the assigned regulatory docket and are available for examination in the Rules Docket (AGC–200), Room 915G, FAA Headquarters Building (FOB 10A), 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone (202) 267–3132.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tawana Matthews, (202) 267–9783, or Angela Anderson, (202) 267–9681, Office of Rulemaking (ARM–1), Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591.

This notice is published pursuant to paragraphs (c), (e), and (g) of § 11.27 of part 11 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 11).

Issued in Washington, DC., on February 2, 1998.

Donald P. Byrne,

Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulations.

Petitions for Exemption

Docket No.: 29110

Petitioner: Era Aviation, Inc.

Sections of the FAR Affected: 14 CFR 121.356(b)

Description of Relief Sought: To permit the petitioner to operate its Douglas DC–3 aircraft under 14 CFR part 121 without those aircraft being equipped an approved Traffic Alert and Collison Avoidance System.

[FR Doc. 98–2999 Filed 2– 5–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief from the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR Part 236 as detailed below.

Block Signal Application (BS–AP)—No. 3454

Applicant: Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, Mr. William G. Peterson, Director Signal Engineering, 4515 Kansas Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas 66106.

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway seeks approval of the proposed reduction of the traffic control system limits, on Main Track No. 2, at North Tennessee Yard, near Memphis, Tennessee, on the Thayer Subdivision, Southeastern Division, consisting of the relocation of Signal 180R and the associated Begin and End CTC limits, from milepost 494.6 to milepost 492.9.

The reason given for the proposed changes is that the planned installation of a new run through track (Third Quarter 1998), will allow straight through movements for the majority of freight trains on Main Track No. 1, and will eliminate unnecessary delays for the switch engine assignments that works customers on Main Track No. 2 between North Tennessee Yard and milepost 492.9.

BS–AP–No. 3455

Applicant: Union Pacific Railroad Company, Mr. P.M. Abaray, Chief Engineer—Signals 1416 Dodge Street, Room 1000, Omaha, Nebraska 68179–1000.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company seeks approval of the proposed modification of the traffic control system, on the two main tracks, mileposts' 566.7 and 566.8, near Laramie, Wyoming, Laramie Subdivision, consisting of the discontinuance and removal of Signal 566.7 on Track No. 1 and Signal 566.8 on Track No. 2.

The reason given for the proposed changes is that the signals are no longer required and train operations will be improved by the increased signal spacing.

BS–AP–No. 3456

Applicant: Union Pacific Railroad Company, Mr. P.M. Abaray, Chief Engineer—Signals 1416 Dodge Street, Room 1000, Omaha, Nebraska 68179–1000.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company seeks approval of the proposed discontinuance and removal of the rail locks and associated power-operated switch machines, on the Rock Street Industrial Lead track, Junction Bridge, milepost 345.0, near Little Rock, Arkansas.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to modernize the operation of the Junction Bridge.

BS–AP–No. 3457

Applicant: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Mr. John LaForce, P.E., Deputy Chief Engineer, Operations, 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107–3780.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) seeks approval of the proposed modification of Chestnut Hill West Interlocking, milepost 6.6, on the Chestnut Hill West Line, in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, consisting of the conversion of Chestnut Hill West Interlocking from manual control to automatic operation. The proposed conversion includes the retirement of the manually controlled electro-mechanical interlocking machine for directing train movements; installation of vital microprocessor technology and revision of interlocking control logic to provide for the automatic routing of train movements; installation of a local control panel for manual manipulation in a central instrument housing; and revision of interlocking control logic to provide for existing split point derails and respective home signals to be operated by push button panels, to be located adjacent to the engineer's cab of a train ready for departure from the Chestnut Hill West Terminal, on each respective track.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to retire obsolete facilities no longer required for present operation thereby reducing costs associated operating the system.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the protestant in the proceeding. The original and two copies of the protest shall be filed with the Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Mail Stop 25, Washington, D.C. 20590 within 45 calendar days of the date of publication of this notice. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on February 2, 1998.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 98–2980 Filed 2–5–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Denial of Motor Vehicle Defect Petition

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Denial of petition for a defect investigation.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the reasons for the denial of a petition submitted to NHTSA under 49 U.S.C. 30162, requesting that the agency commence a proceeding to determine the existence of a defect related to motor vehicle safety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. George Chiang, Office of Defects Investigation, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366–5206.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Mr. and Mrs. Scott Montreuil of Ramsey, Minnesota, submitted a petition dated October 1, 1997, requesting that an investigation be initiated to determine whether 1993 Chrysler Jeep Grand Cherokees contain a defect related to motor vehicle safety within the meaning of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. The petition alleges that 1993 Chrysler Jeep Grand Cherokees have a defective viscous coupling that could cause the steering to bind and lock up, and possibly affect the vehicle's braking.

Although not all Jeep Grand Cherokees utilize a viscous coupling, some 1993 through 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokees are equipped with a Quadra-Trac transfer case. An integral part of the Quadra-Trac transfer case is its viscous coupling, a speed-sensitive device that controls torque output between the front and rear drive shafts. The housing of the viscous coupling contains high viscosity silicone fluid and specially engineered metal plates splined alternately to an inner and outer drum. When there is a difference in front-to-rear axle speed, such as when the rear wheels slip, the resulting friction between the metal plates increases the temperature inside the unit. This causes the fluid to expand, building pressure that moves the plates together. This occurs almost instantaneously in two modes: the ''shear'' mode, when momentary speed differences occur such as in cornering or tight turns, causing the plates to move near each other, or the ''hump'' mode, when high-speed differences occur for a longer period of time, such as in deep snow or on off-road trails, causing the plates to lock and the front and rear drive shafts to turn at the same speed for maximum traction. As traction is gained, the fluid cools, and the plates separate.

When the viscous coupling fails, it may remain in one of the above two modes all the time, regardless of whether there is a difference between front-and-rear axle speed. If the coupling fails in the ''hump'' mode on dry pavement, it may cause vehicle hopping/bucking during turns, resulting in rapid wear of tires.

NHTSA drove a Jeep Grand Cherokee with a simulated failure of the viscous coupling in the ''hump'' mode on dry pavement at various speeds. Some hopping/bucking was experienced while the vehicle executed turns. However, no steering or braking problems were experienced at any time.

A review of agency data files, including information reported to the Auto Safety Hotline by consumers, indicated that, aside from the petition, there were no other reports concerning failure or malfunction of the viscous coupling in 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokees. There was a report pertaining to transmission lockup when the engine was started, but this was not related to a failure of the viscous coupling.

Chrysler Corporation has received 40 complaints concerning failure or malfunction of the viscous coupling in the transfer case of 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokees. Five of these complaints report handling problems, such as vehicle hopping during turns. The remaining 35 complaints are solely related to financial assistance issues. No crashes or injuries were reported.

The agency has analyzed available information concerning the problem alleged in the petition. Based on its understanding of viscous couplings, NHTSA believes that the failure or malfunction of the viscous coupling in the subject vehicles cannot cause lockup of the steering or adversely affect the brake system.

For the reasons presented above, it is unlikely that NHTSA would issue an order for the notification and remedy of a safety-related defect in the subject vehicles at the conclusion of the investigation requested in the petition. Therefore, in view of the need to allocate and prioritize NHTSA's limited resources to best accomplish the agency's safety mission, the petition is denied.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30162(d); delegations of authority at CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: January 26, 1998.

Kenneth N. Weinstein,

Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance.

[FR Doc. 98–2937 Filed 2–5–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA–98–3412; Notice 1]

DeTomaso Modena S.p.A.; Receipt of Application for Temporary Exemption From Three Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

DeTomaso Modena S.p.A. of Modena, Italy (''DeTomaso'') has applied for a temporary exemption from portions of three Federal motor vehicle safety standards as described below. The basis of the application is that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with each of the standards.

This notice of receipt of an application is published in accordance with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30113(b)(2) and does not represent any judgment of the agency on the merits of the application.

DeTomaso is a small, independent Italian passenger car manufacturer which produced 15 vehicles between September 1, 1996, and September 1, 1997. The current car produced, and the one for which exemption is sought, is the Guara GT coupe. DeTomaso's ''sister'' corporation, DeTomaso Ponente Srl, was recently formed to launch the development and production of the Bigua coupe, intended as the successor to the Guara. The Bigua has been designed to conform to all applicable U.S. Federal motor vehicle safety standards. However, DeTomaso anticipates that it cannot begin production of the Bigua until 1999 ''given the significant investments required and the need for completion of outside financing.'' In the interim, it