

20590. Telephone: 202-366-4862. Fax number: 202-366-5930.

Issued: September 14, 1998.

Raymond P. Owings,

Associate Administrator for Research and Development.

[FR Doc. 98-25014 Filed 9-17-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

Indexing the Annual Operating Revenues of Railroads

This Notice sets forth the annual inflation adjusting index numbers which are used to adjust gross annual operating revenues of railroads for classification purposes. This indexing methodology will insure that regulated carriers are classified based on real business expansion and not from the effects of inflation. Classification is important because it determines the extent of reporting for each carrier.

The railroad's inflation factors are based on the annual average Railroad's Freight Price Index. This index is developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This index will be used to deflate revenues for comparison with established revenue thresholds.

The base year for railroads is 1991. The inflation index factors are presented as follows:

	Railroad freight index	
	Index	Deflator percent
1991	409.5	100.00
1992	411.8	99.45
1993	415.5	98.55
1994	418.8	97.70
1995	418.17	97.85
1996	417.46	98.02
1997	419.67	97.50

¹ Ex Parte No. 492, *Montana Rail Link, Inc., and Wisconsin Central Ltd., Joint Petition For Rulemaking With Respect To 49 CFR 1201, 8 I.C.C. 2d 625 (1992)*, raised the revenue classification level for Class I railroads from \$50 million to \$250 million (1991 dollars), effective for the reporting year beginning January 1, 1992. The Class II threshold was also revised to reflect a rebasing from \$10 million (1978 dollars) to \$20 million (1991 dollars).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Decker (202)-565-1531. (TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695)

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams, Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-25094 Filed 9-17-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 47X)]

Soo Line Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Hennepin County, MN

Soo Line Railroad Company (Soo) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately .10-mile line of its railroad known as the Minneapolis Terminal Line between milepost 4.09+/- near the western edge of Colfax Avenue North to milepost 4.19+/- near the western edge of Aldrich Avenue North, in Minneapolis, Hennepin County, MN. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 55405.

Soo has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic on the line can be rerouted over other lines; (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.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed. Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on October 18, 1998, 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 1152.29 must be filed by September 28, 1998. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by October 8, 1998, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Larry D. Starns, Esq., Leonard, Street and Deinard Professional Association, 150 South Fifth Street, Suite 2300, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

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

Soo has filed an environmental report which addresses the effects of the abandonment, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by September 23, 1998. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545. 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.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), Soo shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by Soo's filing of a notice of consummation by September 18, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: September 11, 1998.

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 Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).