

Why Exempting TarasPort Would Be Consistent With the Public Interest and Objectives of Motor Vehicle Safety

A denial would adversely affect the company's employees, customers, and the local economy in Monroe County. TarasPort argued that the motor vehicle safety standards

were created with the general public's well being in mind. Assisting our company to comply to those standards only insures public safety. Compliance rather than enforcement is consistent with the objectives of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Comments Filed in Response to the Application Notice

No comments were filed in response to the notice published on January 13, 1999.

Discussion of TarasPort's Application

When TarasPort learned in May 1998 that its two trailer models would have to comply with Standard No. 224, it filed its application for exemption with us the following month. Because we needed to resolve TarasPort's requests for confidentiality, we were unable to move forward with its exemption request until January 1999. Accordingly, we must assume that the company has been experiencing the hardships foreseen in its application.

These hardships are loss of income from reduced production, and the possible layoff of some of its 16 employees as a result. The company's application indicated that it would find it more economical to engineer a solution in-house over an 18 to 24 month time period than to commit it to an engineering firm for a costly solution in something less than that time. The company's net income has been decreasing in each of its three past fiscal years, and presumptively did so in 1998 when it suspended production of its two models of drop deck trailers equipped with rear deck extenders. We believe that TarasPort has demonstrated that requiring immediate compliance would cause it substantial economic hardship.

We note that TarasPort, in spite of limited resources, was able to bring all its other trailers into conformity with Standard No. 224 by its effective date. We believe that the company has therefore made a good faith effort to comply with the standard.

TarasPort contributes to its local economy, even though it is a small business. It is in the public interest to encourage small businesses which add diversity to the marketplace. The temporary exemption of a small number of trailers from the override standard

will not have a significant negative effect upon safety.

As of the end of June 1998, the company estimated that it would need 18 to 24 months to comply with the standard. This indicates that the company believes it can achieve compliance between January 1 and July 1, 2000. We are therefore giving it an exemption until July 1, 2000.

The Administrator's Findings

On the basis of the arguments and discussions above, I find that providing TarasPort an exemption from Standard No. 224 is consistent with the public interest and the objectives of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301—Motor Vehicle Safety, and that compliance with Standard No. 224 would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried to comply with the standard in good faith.

NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 99-2

TarasPort Trailers, Inc., is hereby granted NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 99-2, from 49 CFR 571.224 Standard No. 224 Rear Impact Protection, expiring July 1, 2000. This exemption is restricted to drop deck trailers equipped with rear deck extenders.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30113; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: March 16, 1999.

Ricardo Martinez,

Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

Sunshine Act Meeting

Ex Parte No. 333—Meetings of the Board

TIME & DATE: 10:00 a.m. Thursday, March 25, 1999.

PLACE: Hearing Room, Surface Transportation Board 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423.

STATUS: The Board will meet to discuss among themselves the agenda item listed below. Although the conference is open for public observation, no public participation is permitted.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED: Finance Docket No. 33556, Canadian National Railway Company, Grand Trunk Corporation, and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—control—Illinois Central Corporation, Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chicago, Central and Pacific Railroad Company,

and Cedar River Railroad and Finance Docket No. 33556 (Sub-No. 1), Canadian National Railway Company, Illinois Central Railroad Company, The Kansas City Southern Railway Company, and Gateway Western Railway Company—Terminal Trackage Rights—Union Pacific Railroad Company and Norfolk & Western Railway Company.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Dennis Watson, Office of Congressional and Public Services, Telephone: (202) 565-1594, TDD: (202) 565-1695.

Dated: March 18, 1999.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-7113 Filed 3-18-99; 3:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

March 9, 1999.

The Department of Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before April 21, 1999, to be assured of consideration.

U.S. Customs Service (CUS)

OMB Number: 1515-0068.

Form Number: Customs Form 28.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Request for Information.

Description: Customs Form 28 is used by Customs personnel to request additional information from importers when the invoice or other documentation provide insufficient information for Customs to carry out its responsibilities to protect revenues.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, Individuals or households. Not-for-profit institutions, Federal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 60,000.

Estimated Burden Hours Per Respondent: 33 minutes.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Total Reporting Burden: 30,000 hours.