

Ms. Julie Abraham, Director, Office of International Policy and Harmonization, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20590. Tel: (202)-366-2114, and Fax: (202)-366-2559.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is to advise interested parties that, on November 18 and 19, 1999, NHTSA will host an informal technical meeting relating to global tire harmonization activities of the Working Party on Brakes and Running Gear (GRRF). The GRRF is one of several subsidiary bodies, known as working parties, formed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles to address particular aspects of motor vehicle performance.

I. Background

At the 45th Session of the GRRF, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 1999, the European Tyre and Rim Technical Organisation (ETRTO) submitted a proposal for a global technical regulation for passenger cars tires.¹ (The GRRF is responsible for

¹ The proposed new global tire standard (also known as Global Tire Standard 2000 for New Pneumatic Passenger Car Tires (GTS-2000)) seeks to harmonize the tire standards of the United States, Europe and Japan. It was developed in the context of the TransAtlantic Business Dialogue with the cooperation and support of members from the international tire industry (specifically, the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) from the United States, the Liaison Office of the Rubber Industry of the European Union (BLIC), and the Japan Automobile Tire Manufacturers Association (JATMA)). During the process, the RMA consulted with consumer groups. The tire industry developed the proposed new global tire standard with the intent of recommending its adoption by the United States, other interested governments, WP.29, and the International Standards Organization (ISO). Before developing the proposed new global tire standard, the tire industry reviewed and compared the tire standards of the United States, Europe, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. A copy of the proposed new global tire standard was submitted to NHTSA by BLIC and is available in NHTSA Docket 98-4367 (See document #30).

As described by RMA, the proposed new global tire standard "lists the following test criteria: (1) Physical dimensions for overall width and outer diameter; (2) strength test (plunger energy) for bias-ply and bias-belted tires; (3) bead unseating resistance tests for bias-ply and bias-belted tires; (4) low speed (not less than 50 mph) endurance tests for bias-ply and bias-belted tires plus all radial tires with a speed symbol of "Q" or below; and (5) high speed endurance test for all tires (bias-ply, bias-belted, and radial)." In addition, it contains labeling requirements covering tire pressure, load rating, and tire construction.

The proposed new global tire standard was announced at the November 1998 TABD Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

On January 25, 1999, the RMA, the Tire and Rim Association (TRA), the Rubber Association of Canada (RAC), JATMA, ETRTO, and BLIC petitioned NHTSA requesting that we revise and update Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 109, New Pneumatic Tires, to conform to the

developing safety regulations not only on tires, but also on brakes, wheels and other chassis components of motor vehicles.) In response, the chair of the GRRF encouraged interested participating countries to host informal technical meetings to address the global harmonization of tire regulations. He also asked that these meetings address minimum performance requirements for tire grip (traction), which was originally proposed by the U.K. in February 1998, as an amendment to ECE Regulation 30, Pneumatic Tyres.

The United Kingdom's Department of Environment, Transport, and Regions (DETR) hosted the first informal technical meeting in London, England on July 1-2, 1999. Mr. Gordon Burford of the DETR chaired the meeting on behalf of Mr. Geoff Harvey, the Chair of the informal technical group, who was unable to participate in the meeting. The meeting was attended by sixteen representatives from the following governments and organizations: The United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Hungary, the Netherlands, ETRTO, and RMA. The participants spent the first day discussing the technical aspects associated with developing a global tire standard, including tire dimensions, markings, and specific performance tests. They spent the second day discussing what requirements should be included in the tire grip test. The minutes from the first meeting are available in NHTSA Docket 98-3592 (See document #12).

II. Second Informal Technical Meeting on Global Tire Harmonization

On November 18 and 19, 1999, the United States will host the second informal technical meeting on global tire harmonization of the GRRF at the U.S. Department of Transportation. The meeting will follow the informal discussion format of the first meeting. Mr. Geoff Harvey of the DETR will chair the meeting. The goal of the meeting is to address the specific research and development needs associated with global tire harmonization and minimum performance requirements for tire grip (traction). The first day of the meeting will focus on the technical issues associated with the global harmonization of tire standards. The group will begin the process of drafting a technical regulation that will eventually be submitted to the GRRF.

proposed new global tire standard. On June 8, 1999, we granted the petition. In a September 3, 1999 letter to all of the petitioners, we solicited additional information regarding each of the petitioners' requests. A copy of the letter is available in the docket for this notice.

The second day of the meeting will address issues related to tire grip. The group intends to address the form of testing that should be used to measure tire grip (e.g., surface selection, testing mode, etc.).

The minutes of the meeting will be kept and placed in the public docket for this notice.

All persons and organizations wishing to attend the meeting are asked to contact George Soodoo at the address or telephone number indicated above.

Seating is limited. Therefore, we ask that organizations limit the number of their representatives to one or two persons in order to ensure that all individuals and organizations who wish to participate are able to do so.

Following is the provisional agenda for the meeting:

UN ECE GRRF Ad-hoc Group—Global Harmonization of Tyre Regulations and Tyre Grip

Provisional Agenda: 2nd meeting 18 and 19 November 1999, to be held in Washington DC, U.S.A.

Thursday 18 November—Global Harmonization of Tire Regulations

- Minutes of the first meeting.
- Draft document for global tire harmonization.
- Response of tire industry to U.S. request for information.

Friday 18 November—Tire Grip

- U.K. proposal on tire grip.
- Discussion on variety of issues including research needs, test surface, and selection of control tire.

Issued on: November 2, 1999.

Martin Koubek,

Assistant to the Director Office of International Policy and Harmonization.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33805]

Ameren Corporation—Control Exemption—Missouri Central Railroad Company

Ameren Corporation (Ameren), the parent of wholly owned subsidiary Ameren ERC, Inc. (ERC), has filed a verified notice of exemption to continue in control of the Joppa & Eastern Railroad (JERR) and to acquire control of Missouri Central Railroad Company (MCR). On October 13, 1999, Ameren and ERC also filed a motion for

protective order under 49 CFR 1104.14 and a protective order was granted.¹

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after October 20, 1999.

Ameren, a noncarrier holding company, currently controls one railroad, the JERR, through Ameren's controlling interest in Electric Energy, Inc. (EEI).² ERC is not a rail carrier and does not control any rail carriers. ERC purchased 95% of the stock of MCRR.³ Because ERC's parent is already in control of one railroad (JERR), the MCRR stock purchased by ERC was placed in a voting trust on October 7, 1999. On or shortly after the October 20, 1999 effective date of this control exemption, ERC was expected to assume control of MCRR. The stock of MCRR had been owned 100% by General Railway Corporation, with the principal shareholder being John F. Larkin.

Ameren states that: (i) These railroads do not connect with each other; (ii) the acquisition of control is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect the railroads with each other or any railroad in their corporate family; and (iii) the transaction does not involve a Class I carrier. Therefore, the transaction is exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. See 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2).

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and

11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33805, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on John R. Molm, Esq., Troutman Sanders LLP, 1300 I Street, NW, Suite 500 East, Washington, DC 20005-3314.

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

Decided: October 29, 1999.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-28878 Filed 11-4-99; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Departmental Offices; International Monetary Fund Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Department of the Treasury.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Under section 610 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, the Secretary of the Treasury is required to establish an International Monetary Fund Advisory Committee (the "Committee") to advise the Secretary on IMF policy.

DATES: The second meeting of the Committee will be held on November 22, 1999, beginning at 1:30 p.m. in the Diplomatic Room located on the third floor of the main Department of the Treasury building, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Designated Federal Official: William McFadden, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of International Monetary and Financial Policy, Room 4444, Department of the Treasury, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., 20220. Telephone

number 202-622-0343, fax number (202) 622-7664.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

Agenda of Meeting

The IMF Advisory Committee will discuss the legislated mandates that affect the financial services sector, with a focus on questions related to strengthening the domestic market and questions that relate to burden sharing and crisis resolution.

Procedural

This meeting is open to the public. Please note that the meeting may close early if all business is finished. If you wish to attend please FAX your full name, birthday, and social security number to the Designated Federal Official no later than 4 p.m., November 17, for clearance into the Treasury Building.

Members of the public may submit written comments. If you wish to furnish such comments, please provide 16 copies of your written material to the Designated Federal Official. If you wish to have your comments distributed to members of the Committee in advance of the second meeting, 16 copies of any written material should be provided to the Designated Federal Official no later than November 15, 1999.

Dated: October 28, 1999.

Lauren M. Vaughan,
Designated Federal Official.

[FR Doc. 99-28820 Filed 11-4-99; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

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 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the

¹ See *Ameren Corporation—Control Exemption—Missouri Central Railroad Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 33805 (STB served Oct. 22, 1999).

² The JERR owns and operates approximately 5 miles of track within Illinois. EEI was authorized by the Board's predecessor, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), to construct the approximately 5-mile line in *Joppa and Eastern Railroad Co.—Construction Exemption—Joppa, IL*, Finance Docket No. 31656 (ICC served July 5 and Dec. 24, 1990). The ICC also authorized the JERR to lease approximately 2.5 miles of existing trackage in the same vicinity in *Joppa and Eastern Railroad Co.—Petition for Exemption—Lease—Missouri Pacific Railroad Co.*, Finance Docket No. 31656 (Sub-No. 1) (ICC served May 16, 1991).

³ All of MCRR's rail line will be within Missouri. The verified notice states that MCRR will own and operate approximately 278 miles of railroad. The notice also states that MCRR was to acquire ownership of approximately 244.5 miles of line and trackage rights over 33.5 miles of line on the date of filing of this verified notice (October 13, 1999), upon consummation of noncarrier GRC Holdings Corporation's acquisition and immediate conveyance to MCRR of rail assets from Union Pacific Railroad Company. See *GRC Holdings—Acquisition Exemption—Union Pacific Railroad Co.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33537 (STB served Jan. 27, 1998) and *Missouri Central Railroad Co.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Lines of Union Pacific Railroad Co.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33508 (STB served Jan. 27, 1998).