

Lindholm, Program Manager, Office of Air, Rail and Transit, 700 East Broadway Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1387 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34144]

Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.—Sale and Lease Exemption Within a Corporate Family Transaction—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.

Georgia Southwestern Railroad Inc. (GSWR) and South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc. (SCCR), both Class III rail carriers, have jointly filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3).¹ The exemption transaction involves what GSWR describes as a corporate family transaction whereby GSWR will sell to SCCR, and SCCR will lease back to GSWR, 101.27 miles of rail lines (the Lines), located in Georgia: (1) Between milepost SLB 0.38 near Columbus and milepost SLB 23 near Cusseta; (2) between Valuation Station 41+60 and Valuation Station 107+35 near Columbus; (3) between Valuation Station 0+00 and Valuation Station 41+61 near Columbus; (4) between milepost SLC 91.68 near Bainbridge and milepost SLC 160.0 near Cuthbert; and (5) between milepost 63.55 near Dawson and milepost 72.88 near Sasser. In addition, GSWR will acquire the operating rights of SCCR for 13.62 miles of rail line between milepost 86.5 at Albany and milepost 72.88 at Sasser.² The 13.62-mile line was converted to a trail, in accordance with an interim trail use arrangement, on October 16, 1997.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after December 28, 2001, the effective date of the exemption.

This transaction is within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior approval under 49 CFR

¹ GSWR and SCCR are subsidiaries of RailAmerica, Inc., a noncarrier.

² See *Georgia Great Southern Division, South Carolina Central Railroad Co., Inc.—Abandonment and Discontinuance Exemption—Between Albany and Dawson, in Terrell, Lee and Dougherty Counties, GA*, Docket No. AB-389 (Sub-No. 1X) (STB served Aug. 16, 1996).

1180.2(d)(3). The parties stated that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers outside of the corporation family.

The purpose of the transaction is to simplify the arrangements for the operation of the Lines. SCCR will own the Lines and GSWR will operate the Lines. The proposed transaction will improve the financial viability of GSWR and SCCR and they will benefit from the purchase price and reduced operating costs, while still providing rail service.

This transaction is related to a simultaneously filed notice of exemption in STB Finance Docket No. 34057, *State of Georgia Department of Transportation—Acquisition Exemption—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.*, wherein the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)³ is acquiring certain railroad assets of SCCR, including the above-noted 101.27 miles of railroad lines, but not including the right to conduct common carrier freight operations over the Lines.⁴

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under section 11324 and 11325 that involve 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 notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to reopen the proceeding 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. 34144, 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, a copy of each pleading must be served on Gary A.

³ GDOT simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss the notice of exemption on jurisdictional grounds. That motion will be addressed by the Board in a separate decision.

⁴ Concurrently with the closing of the transaction between SCCR and GSWR, SCCR will sell the Lines to GDOT, and GDOT will acquire only the physical assets. GDOT will not hold or perform common carrier service. GSWR will provide common carrier service and SCCR will retain a permanent easement to provide residual common carrier service if GSWR or an assignee of GSWR is unable to provide service over the Lines.

Laakso, Vice President Regulatory Counsel, RailAmerica, Inc., 5300 Broken Sound Boulevard NW., Second Floor, Boca Raton, FL 33487; and Louis E. Gitomer, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1404 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34057]

State of Georgia, Department of Transportation—Acquisition Exemption—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.

State of Georgia, Department of Transportation (GDOT), a noncarrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31¹ to acquire from the South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc. (SCCR), a Class III rail carrier, but not to operate, 101.27 miles of rail lines (the Lines) located in Georgia: (1) Between milepost SLB 0.38 near Columbus and milepost SLB 23 near Cusseta; (2) between Valuation Station 41+60 and Valuation Station 107+35 near Columbus; (3) between Valuation Station 0+00 and Valuation Station 41+61 near Columbus; (4) between milepost SLC 91.68 near Bainbridge, and milepost SLC 160.0 near Cuthbert; and (5) between milepost 63.55 near Dawson and milepost 72.88 near Sasser.

GDOT, SCCR, and RailAmerica, Inc., the parent company of SCCR, have entered into an agreement whereby GDOT will acquire only the physical assets in the Lines, but not the right to conduct common carrier freight operations over the Lines. SCCR and its affiliate, Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc. (GSWR) have entered into a separate agreement for GSWR to sell the Lines to SCCR, and for SCCR to lease the Lines back to GSWR. That related transaction is the subject of a simultaneously filed notice of exemption in STB Finance Docket No. 34144, *Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.—Sale and Lease Exemption Within*

¹ GDOT simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss the notice of exemption on jurisdictional grounds. That motion will be addressed by the Board in a separate decision.

a Corporate Family Transaction—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc., wherein GSWR seeks to sell the Lines to SCCR and SCCR will lease the lines back to GSWR to conduct common carrier freight operations over the Lines. Concurrent with the closing of that corporate family transaction, it is expected that SCCR will sell the Lines to GDOT as described in this transaction, and SCCR will retain a permanent easement to retain the residual common carrier freight obligations over the Lines in the event that GSWR or future assignees are unable to provide common carrier service.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on December 28, 2001, the effective date of the exemption (7 days after the exemption was filed).

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to reopen the proceeding 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. 34057, 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, a copy of each pleading must be served on Hal Wilson, State of Georgia, Department of Transportation, Office of Intermodal Programs, 276 Memorial Drive, SW., Atlanta, GA 30303.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1388 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Departmental Offices; Debt Management Advisory Committee Meeting

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. App. 2, section 10(a)(2), that a meeting will be held at the U.S. Treasury Department, 15th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC on January 29, 2002, of the following debt management advisory committee:

The Bond Market Association

Treasury Borrowing Advisory Committee

The agenda for the meeting provides for a technical background briefing by Treasury staff, followed by a charge by the Secretary of the Treasury or his designate that the Committee discuss particular issues, and a working session. Following the working session, the Committee will present a written report of its recommendations.

The background briefing by Treasury staff will be held at 9 a.m. Eastern time and will be open to the public. The remaining sessions and the committee's reporting session will be closed to the public, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. App. 2, section 10(d) and Public Law 103-202, section 202(c)(1)(B) (31 U.S.C. section 3121 note).

This notice shall constitute my determination, pursuant to the authority placed in heads of departments by 5 U.S.C. App. 2, 10(d) and vested in me by Treasury Department Order No. 101-05, that the closed portions of the meeting are concerned with discussions of the issues presented to the Committee by the Secretary and recommendations of the Committee to the Secretary, pursuant to Public Law 103-202, 202(c)(1)(B). Thus, this information is exempt from disclosure under that provision and 5 U.S.C. 5526(c)(3)(B). In addition, the closed portions of the meeting are concerned with information that is exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(A). The public interest requires that such meetings be closed to the public because the Treasury Department requires frank and full advice from representatives of the financial community prior to making its final decision on major financing operations. Historically, this advice has been offered by debt management advisory committees established by the several major segments of the financial community. When so utilized, such a committee is recognized to be an advisory committee under 5 U.S.C. App. 2, section 3.

Although the Treasury's final announcement of financing plans may not reflect the recommendations provided in reports of the advisory committee, premature disclosure of the committee's deliberations and reports would be likely to lead to significant financial speculation in the securities market. Thus, these meetings fall within the exemption covered by 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(A).

The Office of Financial Markets is responsible for maintaining records of debt management advisory committee meetings and for providing annual reports setting forth a summary of committee activities and such other

matters as may be informative to the public consistent with the policy of 5 U.S.C. 552b. The Designated Federal Officer or other responsible agency official who may be contacted for additional information is Paul Malvey, Director, Office of Market Finance at 202-622-2630.

Dated: January 14, 2002.

Brian C. Roseboro,

Assistant Secretary, Financial Markets.

[FR Doc. 02-1307 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-25-M

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0047]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed by the agency when a purchaser assumes a veteran's home in release of liability cases.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before March 19, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420 or e-mail: irmnkess@vba.va.gov. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0047" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each