

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 31, 2003.

Anthony F. Fazio,

Director, Office of Rulemaking.

[FR Doc. 03-8285 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Lafourche and St. Charles Parishes, LA

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise interested agencies and the public that, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed road project (State Project Nol 700-92-0011 and Federal Aid Project No. NH-9201(501)) in Lafourche and St. Charles Parishes, Louisiana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William C. Farr, Programs Operations Manager, Federal Highway Administration, 5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808, Telephone: (225) 757-7615; Facsimile (225) 757-7601 or Vincent Russo, Environmental Engineer Administrator, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804, Telephone: (225) 248-4191; Facsimile: (225) 248-4188.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD), will prepare an EIS on a proposal to upgrade a portion of U.S. Highway 90 (US 90) to full "Control of Access" highway meeting interstate standards. US 90 would become an extension of Interstate 49 (I-49). The project consists of the proposed I-49 extension from Raceland to the Davis Pond Diversion. The approximate distance of the project is 23 miles.

Proposed I-49 south is comprised of approximately 143 miles of US 90 from Lafayette to the Westbank Expressway in Jefferson Parish. This project is intended to provide traffic safety, a primary hurricane evacuation route serving 37% of Louisiana's population, access to nine airports and four of Louisiana's seven deep draft ports, and provide a vital link for economic development of the region.

Studies have been completed on the I-49 Connector (US 90/US 167) in Lafayette and studies are being completed on the Lafayette Regional Airport to Route LA 88 and the Wax Lake Outlet to Berwick sections of I-49 South. This proposed EIS addresses the Raceland to Davis Pond section of I-49 South, herein after referred to as Section of Independent Utility (SIU) 1. More specifically, this project will involve preliminary environmental (including social environment) and engineering constraints studies, the development of concept line and grade alternatives, initial impact evaluation, more detailed study of line and grade alternatives and environmental impact, the development of a draft EIS, a public hearing, preparation of a final EIS with complete, detailed environmental and line and grade studies, and a Record of Decision.

A Solicitation of Views (SOV) letter will be submitted for distribution to representatives on the SOV mailing list. After mailing of the SOV, a scoping meeting will be held with LaDOTD and interested agencies. A public meeting will be scheduled in both of the affected parishes to introduce the project and receive public comment after the initial scoping meeting with LaDOTD. There will be a total of three public meetings and one public hearing in each parish (Lafourche and St. Charles Parishes) throughout the NEPA process to present findings to the public and obtain public input. Additionally, small group informational meetings may be held at the request of community groups throughout the project.

Interested individuals, organizations, and public agencies are invited to attend the public meetings and participate in identifying any important environmental issues related to the proposed alternatives and suggesting alternatives which are more economical or which have less environmental effects while achieving similar transportation objectives.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is addressed, and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

The public will receive notices on location and time of future opportunities for participation at meetings and public hearings through newspaper advertisements and other means. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information as the project develops, please contact Mr. William Farr with

FHWA or Mr. Vincent Russo with LaDOTD at the addresses above.

In accordance with the regulations and guidance by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), as well as 23 CFR part 450 and 23 policies; the EIS will include an evaluation of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives. The EIS will comply with the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The EIS will meet the requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93 and 23 CFR 450.322(b)(8)). After publication, the draft EIS will be available for public agency review and comment.

The Final EIS will consider the public and agency comments received during the public and agency circulation of the EIS and will identify the preferred alternative. Opportunity for additional public comment will be provided throughout all phases of the project development.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Dated: Issued on April 1, 2003.

William A. Sussmann,

Division Administrator, FHWA, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

[FR Doc. 03-8330 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes, LA

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for proposed road project (State Project No. 700-92-0011 and Federal Aid Project No. NH-9201(501)) in St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes, Louisiana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William C. Farr, Program operation Manager, Federal Highway Administration, 5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, Telephone: (225) 757-7615; and Vince Russo, Environmental Engineer

Administrator, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, 5040 Florida Boulevard, Room 204A, POB 94245, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70804, Telephone: (225) 248-4190. Additional information may also be obtained at the I-49 Web site: <http://www.i49south.org>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, part 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, the FHWA, in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, will prepare an EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on a proposal to improve U.S. Route 90 (U.S. 90) in St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes, Louisiana. The proposed improvement would involve an upgrade of the existing roadway to Federal Interstate Standards on existing alignment and/or new alignment and name the new facility Interstate 49 (I-49). The proposed project is between LA 306 to the west of the I-310 Interchange to the West Bank Expressway with a length of approximately 20 miles.

Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand, and hurricane evacuation. Also, included in this proposal is a new improved interchange with Interstate Highway 310 (I-310) just west of Boutte, Louisiana. Alternatives under consideration include (1) taking no action (no-build); (2) improving the existing facility on existing alignment from a four-lane open access roadway to a full control of access roadway according to Federal Interstate Standards; and (3) improving the existing facility on existing alignment to the maximum extent practicable and on new alignment where required from a four-lane open to limited access roadway to a full control of access roadway according to Federal Interstate Standards, and (4) building a new full control of access four-lane roadway all on new alignment according to Federal Interstate Standards. Incorporated into and studied with the various build alternatives will be design variations of grade and alignment along with various geometric concepts on the segment U.S. 90/I-49 between the Huey P. Long Bridge and the end of the project to the east.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A series of three (3) public meetings will be held in the

project area in St. Charles and Jefferson Parishes in 2003 and early 2004. In addition, a Public Hearing will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and the Hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the Public Hearing. A formal scoping meeting is planned for April or May of 2003. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the scoping meeting.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above. Anyone wishing to be placed on the mailing list for future notices and announcements concerning this project may request so by writing the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning, and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on April 1, 2003.

William A. Sussmann,

Division Administrator, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

[FR Doc. 03-8331 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 646]

Rail Rate Challenges in Small Cases

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board, DOT.

ACTION: Amended notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board (Board) is rescheduling the public hearing in this matter to April 22, 2003.¹ New dates for filing notices of intent to participate and for filing written testimony are established.

DATES: The public hearing will take place on Tuesday, April 22, 2003, at 10 a.m. Any person wishing to speak at the hearing should file with the Board a written notice of intent to participate, and should indicate a requested time allotment, as soon as possible but no

¹ The hearing had originally been set for April 16, 2003.

later than April 11, 2003. Each speaker should also file with the Board his/her written testimony by April 16, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The public hearing will take place in the 7th floor hearing room at the Board's offices in the Mercury Building, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC. An original and 10 copies of all notices of intent to participate and testimony should refer to STB Ex Parte No. 646, and should be sent to: Surface Transportation Board, Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 646, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Beryl Gordon, (202) 565-1616. [Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) (Hearing Impaired): (800) 877-8339.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The public hearing in this matter is for the purpose of providing a forum for the expression of views and proposals by rail shippers, railroads, and other interested persons, regarding rail rate challenges in small cases to be considered by the Board. Decisions and notices of the Board, including this notice and the prior notice in this matter, are available on the Board's Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

Dated: April 1, 2003.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-8393 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Form 8800

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

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, Pub. L. 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 8800, Application for Additional Extension of Time To File U.S. Return for a