

STR will own all of the assets of ALAB and A&F, and STR will be responsible for all debts, liabilities, and obligations of ALAB and A&F.

The transaction is expected to be consummated on or after February 15, 2009 (30 days after the exemption was filed).

STR, ALAB, and A&F are affiliated Class III rail carriers, all of which are controlled by noncarrier holding company, Pioneer Railcorp (Pioneer). STR operates approximately 2.5 miles of rail line in Illinois. ALAB operates approximately 60 miles of rail line in Alabama. A&F operates approximately 43 miles of rail line in Alabama.

The purpose of the transaction is to simplify Pioneer's corporate structure and reduce overhead costs and duplication by eliminating two corporations while retaining the same assets to serve customers. The transaction will also streamline accounting functions within the Pioneer corporate family. Although ALAB and A&F will cease to exist as separate corporate entities, STR will operate the respective rail properties under the trade name the Alabama Railroad, while retaining the ALAB and A&F reporting marks assigned by the Association of American Railroads.

This is a transaction within a corporate family of the type exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). The parties state that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or changes in the competitive balance with carriers outside the Pioneer corporate family.

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. Accordingly, the Board may not impose labor protective conditions here, because all of the carriers involved are Class III rail carriers.

If the 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. Petitions for stay will be due no later than February 6, 2009 (at least 7 days before the effective date of the exemption).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 35214, must be filed with

the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on applicants' representatives, Robert A. Wimbish, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20037, and Daniel A. LaKemper, 1318 S. Johanson Road, Peoria, IL 61607.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: January 22, 2009.

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

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Clerk.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 646 (Sub-No. 2)]

Simplified Standards for Rail Rate Cases—Taxes in Revenue Shortfall Allocation Method

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of decision.

SUMMARY: By a decision served on January 30, 2009, the Board directed the Association of American Railroads (AAR), and permitted other parties, to file supplemental evidence so that the Board has a full record on which to base its methodology to calculate a railroad-specific average state tax rate for use in the Revenue Shortfall Allocation Method (RSAM).

DATES: AAR is directed to file supplemental evidence by February 19, 2009. Any interested person may reply by March 11, 2009. AAR's rebuttal is due March 25, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Timothy J. Strafford, (202) 245-0356. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board recently found that the failure to include state and federal taxes in RSAM calculations was material error. The Board concluded that the use of the statutory federal tax rate, combined with a railroad-specific weighted average state tax rate, best approximated the marginal taxes that the carrier would pay on the incremental revenue hypothesized by RSAM.

The decision served on January 30, 2009, directed AAR to submit the evidence and calculations necessary to

establish carrier-specific average state tax rates for each Class I railroad, including state corporate income tax rates and the number of miles operated by each carrier in each state it operates in for each of the years 2002-2007, by February 19, 2009. Any interested person may reply by March 11, 2009. AAR's rebuttal is due March 25, 2009. Once there is resolution to any disputes over how to calculate the carrier-specific state tax rates, the Board will publish the new RSAM figures.

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. A copy of the Board's decision is available for inspection or copying at the Board's Public Docket Room, Room 131, 395 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001, and is posted on the Board's Web site, <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

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

Decided: January 23, 2008.

By the Board, Chairman Nottingham, Vice Chairman Mulvey, and Commissioner Buttrey.

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. E9-2056 Filed 1-29-09; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0074]

Agency Information Collection (Request for Change of Program or Place of Training) Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521), this notice announces that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, will submit the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument.

DATE: Comments must be submitted on or before March 2, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information through <http://www.Regulations.gov> or to VA's OMB Desk Officer, OMB Human