

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**[Public Notice: 10346]****Determination Under Section 7070(c)(1) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 Regarding the Central Government of Venezuela**

Pursuant to section 7070(c)(1) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 (Div. J, Pub. L. 115–31), I hereby determine that the Government of Venezuela has recognized the independence of, or has established diplomatic relations with, the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

This determination shall be published in the **Federal Register** and on the Department of State website and, along with the accompanying Memorandum of Justification, shall be reported to Congress.

Rex W. Tillerson,
Secretary of State.

[FR Doc. 2018–04532 Filed 3–5–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–29–P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**[Public Notice: 10343]****U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy; Notice of Meeting**

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy will hold a public meeting from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at the Rayburn Office Building, room 2200 (45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515).

The public meeting will be on *Optimizing diplomatic engagement: An evidence-based, results-oriented approach*. The session will include a presentation and discussion of recommendations on improving the assessment of State Department public diplomacy programs.

This meeting is open to the public, members and staff of Congress, the State Department, Defense Department, the media, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. An RSVP is required. To attend and make any requests for reasonable accommodation, email Michelle Bowen at BowenMC1@state.gov by 5pm on Friday, March 16, 2018. Please arrive for the meeting by 10:15am to allow for a prompt start.

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy appraises U.S. Government activities

intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics. The Advisory Commission may conduct studies, inquiries, and meetings, as it deems necessary. It may assemble and disseminate information and issue reports and other publications, subject to the approval of the Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Director. The Advisory Commission may undertake foreign travel in pursuit of its studies and coordinate, sponsor, or oversee projects, studies, events, or other activities that it deems desirable and necessary in fulfilling its functions.

The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The members of the Commission shall represent the public interest and shall be selected from a cross section of educational, communications, cultural, scientific, technical, public service, labor, business, and professional backgrounds. Not more than four members shall be from any one political party. The President designates a member to chair the Commission.

The current members of the Commission are: Mr. Sim Farar of California, Chairman; Mr. William Hybl of Colorado, Vice Chairman; Ambassador Penne Korth-Peacock of Texas; Anne Terman Wedner of Illinois; and Ms. Georgette Mosbacher of New York. Two seats on the Commission are currently vacant.

To request further information about the meeting or the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, you may contact its Executive Director, Dr. Shawn Powers, at PowersSM@state.gov.

Shawn Powers,

Executive Director, Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2018–04505 Filed 3–5–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–45–P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**[Docket No. MCF 21080]****National Express Transit Corporation—Acquisition of Control—Aristocrat Limousine and Bus, Inc.**

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice Tentatively Approving and Authorizing Finance Transaction.

SUMMARY: On February 5, 2018, National Express Transit Corporation (National Express), an intrastate passenger motor carrier, and Brenda Baxter, Richard Wright, and Ralph Wright (collectively, Sellers) (National Express and Sellers collectively, Applicants), jointly filed an

application for National Express to acquire from Sellers control of Aristocrat Limousine and Bus, Inc. (Aristocrat), an interstate and intrastate passenger motor carrier. The Board is tentatively approving and authorizing the transaction and, if no opposing comments are timely filed, this notice will be the final Board action. Persons wishing to oppose the application must follow the rules.

DATES: Comments must be filed by April 20, 2018. Applicants may file a reply by May 7, 2018. If no opposing comments are filed by April 20, 2018, this notice shall be effective on April 21, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of any comments referring to Docket No. MCF 21080 to: Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, send one copy of comments to: Andrew K. Light, Scopelitis, Garvin, Light, Hanson & Feary, P.C., 10 W. Market Street, Suite 1400, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nathaniel Bawcombe at (202) 245–0376. Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) for the hearing impaired: 1–800–877–8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: National Express is a motor carrier incorporated under the laws of Delaware that provides intrastate passenger transportation service and utilizes approximately 774 passenger-carrying vehicles and 855 drivers. Additionally, National Express, which does not have interstate authority from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), owns and controls two passenger motor carriers that do hold FMCSA interstate carrier authority: Rainbow Management Service Inc. (Rainbow) (MC–490015), which provides interstate and intrastate charter and special party passenger services in New York, and Trans Express, Inc. (Trans Express) (MC–187819), which provides interstate and intrastate passenger transportation services in New York. National Express is indirectly controlled by a British corporation, National Express Group, PLC (Express Group). Express Group also indirectly controls the following interstate and intrastate motor carriers of passengers (collectively, National Express Affiliated Carriers):

- Beck Bus Transportation Corp., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC–143528), is primarily engaged in providing student school bus transportation services in Illinois;
- Durham School Services, L.P., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC–163066), is primarily engaged in

providing student school bus transportation services in several states, and charter passenger services to the public;

- MV Student Transportation Inc., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-148934), is primarily engaged in providing student school bus transportation services, and charter passenger services to the public;

- National Express Transit—Yuma (NETY), which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-960629), is primarily engaged in providing paratransit services in the area of Yuma, Ariz.;

- Petermann Ltd., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-364668), is primarily engaged in providing non-regulated school bus transportation services in Ohio, and charter passenger services to the public;

- Petermann Northeast LLC, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-723926), is primarily engaged in providing student school bus transportation services, primarily in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and also provides charter passenger services to the public;

- Petermann Southwest LLC, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-644996), is primarily engaged in providing non-regulated school bus transportation services in Texas, and also provides charter passenger services to the public;

- Petermann STSA, LLC, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-749360), is primarily engaged in providing non-regulated school bus transportation services, primarily in Kansas, and also provides charter passenger services to the public;

- The Provider Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Provider Bus, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-986909), is primarily engaged in providing non-regulated school bus transportation services in New Hampshire;

- Queen City Transportation, LLC, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-163846), is primarily engaged in providing non-regulated school bus transportation in Ohio, and charter passenger services to the public;

- Trinity, Inc., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-364003), provides non-regulated school bus transportation services in southeastern Michigan, and charter service to the public;

- Trinity Student Delivery LLC, which holds interstate carrier authority (MC-836335), primarily provides non-regulated school bus transportation services in areas of northern Ohio, and passenger charter services to the public; and

- White Plains Bus Company, Inc., d/b/a Suburban Charters, which holds

interstate carrier authority (MC-160624), primarily provides non-regulated school bus transportation services in New York, and charter service to the public.

Aristocrat, a motor carrier of passengers, is a New Jersey corporation that holds interstate carrier authority (MC-173839). It provides intrastate and interstate passenger charter services in New Jersey, as well as interstate passenger charter services in New York and Pennsylvania. In providing its services, Aristocrat utilizes 33 passenger vehicles and 28 drivers. Sellers hold all the issued and outstanding equity stock of Aristocrat.

Applicants state that the proposed transaction would place Aristocrat under the control of National Express. The proposed transaction contemplates that National Express would assume 100% control of Aristocrat through stock ownership. According to Applicants, after the transaction, Aristocrat would continue to provide services under the same name but would be operated within the National Express corporate family. Applicants assert that Aristocrat is experienced in the passenger service markets already served by National Express and some of its affiliated carriers.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), the Board must approve and authorize a transaction that it finds consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least: (1) The effect of the proposed transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public; (2) the total fixed charges that result; and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees. Applicants have submitted the information required by 49 CFR 1182.2, including information to demonstrate that the proposed transaction is consistent with the public interest under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b) and a statement, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 14303(g), that Rainbow, Trans Express, the National Express Affiliated Carriers, and Aristocrat exceeded \$2 million in gross operating revenues for the preceding 12-month period.¹

Applicants submit that the proposed transaction would not have a material, detrimental impact on the adequacy of transportation services to the public but rather would improve services to the public. According to Applicants, National Express does not intend to change the operations of Aristocrat but would operate it within the National Express corporate family, which,

National Express states, would enhance the overall viability of the carriers within the corporate family. National Express anticipates that the proposed transaction would result in operating efficiencies and cost savings derived from economies of scale, which would help ensure adequate service to the public.

Applicants state that there are no significant fixed charges associated with the proposed transaction.

Applicants also assert that because National Express intends to continue Aristocrat's existing operations, the proposed transaction would not have a substantial impact on employees or labor conditions, although staffing redundancies could potentially result in limited downsizing of back-office and/or managerial-level personnel.

Applicants further assert that the proposed transaction would not adversely affect competition or the public interest. Applicants claim that Aristocrat is a relatively small carrier in the overall markets in which it competes—interstate motor coach passenger charter services in the New York City metropolitan area, northern New York, northern New Jersey, and northern Pennsylvania (the Service Area). Applicants assert that Aristocrat directly competes with many other passenger charter services in the Service Area, and that there is a competitive market within the Service Area due to a large number of charter service providers. Additionally, Applicants state that the charter operations offered by Aristocrat are geographically dispersed from most of the affiliated carriers of National Express and that there is little overlap in service areas among National Express, its affiliates, and Aristocrat.

On the basis of the application, the Board finds that the proposed acquisition of control is consistent with the public interest and should be tentatively approved and authorized. If any opposing comments are timely filed, these findings will be deemed vacated, and, unless a final decision can be made on the record as developed, a procedural schedule will be adopted to reconsider the application. *See* 49 CFR 1182.6(c). If no opposing comments are filed by the expiration of the comment period, this notice will take effect automatically and will be the final Board action.

This action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c).

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

It is ordered:

¹ Parties must certify that its transaction involves carriers whose aggregate gross operating revenues exceed \$2 million, as required under 49 CFR 1182.2(a)(5).

1. The proposed transaction is approved and authorized, subject to the filing of opposing comments.

2. If opposing comments are timely filed, the findings made in this notice will be deemed vacated.

3. This notice will be effective April 21, 2018, unless opposing comments are filed by April 20, 2018.

4. A copy of this notice will be served on: (1) The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590; (2) the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530; and (3) the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the General Counsel, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Decided: February 28, 2018.

By the Board, Board Members Begeman and Miller.

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2018-04537 Filed 3-5-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

[Docket No. PHMSA-2018-0016]

Pipeline Safety: Information Collection Activities

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, PHMSA invites comments on two information collections that will be expiring on May 31, 2018. PHMSA will request an extension with no change for the information collections identified by OMB control numbers 2137-0594 and 2137-0622.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before May 7, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted in the following ways:

E-Gov website: <http://www.regulations.gov>. This site allows the public to enter comments on any **Federal Register** notice issued by any agency.

Fax: 1-202-493-2251.

Mail: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation

(DOT), 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Hand Delivery: Room W12-140 on the ground level of DOT, West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Instructions: Identify the docket number, PHMSA-2018-0016, at the beginning of your comments. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided. You should know that anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). Therefore, you may want to review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477) or visit <http://www.regulations.gov> before submitting any such comments.

Docket: For access to the docket or to read background documents or comments, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> at any time or to Room W12-140 on the ground level of DOT, West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you wish to receive confirmation of receipt of your written comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard with the following statement:

"Comments on PHMSA-2018-0016." The Docket Clerk will date stamp the postcard prior to returning it to you via the U.S. mail. Please note that due to delays in the delivery of U.S. mail to Federal offices in Washington, DC, we recommend that persons consider an alternative method (internet, fax, or professional delivery service) of submitting comments to the docket and ensuring their timely receipt at DOT.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Angela Dow by telephone at 202-366-1246, by fax at 202-366-4566, or by mail at DOT, PHMSA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, PHP-30, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 1320.8(d), Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, requires PHMSA to provide interested members of the public and affected agencies an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping requests. This notice identifies two information collection

requests that PHMSA will submit to OMB for renewal. The following information is provided for each information collection: (1) Title of the information collection; (2) OMB control number; (3) Current expiration date; (4) Type of request; (5) Abstract of the information collection activity; (6) Description of affected public; (7) Estimate of total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden; and (8) Frequency of collection. PHMSA will request a three-year term of approval for each information collection activity. PHMSA requests comments on the following information collections:

1. *Title:* Customer-Owned Service Lines.

OMB Control Number: 2137-0594.

Current Expiration Date: 5/31/2018.

Type of Request: Renewal of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: This information collection request requires operators of gas service lines who do not maintain their customers' buried piping between service lines and building walls or gas utilization equipment to send written notices to their customers prescribing the proper maintenance of these gas lines and of the potential hazards of not properly maintaining these gas lines. Operators also must maintain records that include a copy of the notice currently in use and evidence that notices were sent to customers within the previous three years. The purpose of the collection is to provide the Office of Pipeline Safety with adequate information about how customer-owned service lines are being maintained to prevent the potential hazards associated with not maintaining the lines. Examples of sufficient notification include a prepared notification with the customer's bill.

Affected Public: State and local governments.

Burden:

Estimated number of responses: 550,000.

Estimated annual burden hours: 9,167.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.

2. *Title:* Pipeline Safety: Public Awareness Program.

OMB Control Number: 2137-0622.

Type of Request: Renewal of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations require each operator to develop and implement a written continuing public education program that follows the guidance provided in the American Petroleum Institute's Recommended Practice RP 1162. Upon