

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD****[Docket No. FD 36891]****Northern Lines Railway, LLC—  
Amended Lease and Operation  
Exemption Containing Interchange  
Commitment—BNSF Railway Company**

Northern Lines Railway, LLC (NLR), a Class III railroad, has filed a verified notice of exemption pursuant to 49 CFR 1150.41 to continue to lease from BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) and operate approximately 14.13 miles of rail line in Stearns, Sherburne, and Benton Counties, Minn. (the Line). The Line extends (a) from the 33rd Avenue North crossing, approximately milepost 76.03, in St. Cloud, Minn., exclusive of the actual crossing, approximately one-half mile west of the St. Cloud Yard, to milepost 80.66 in St. Joseph, Minn.; and (b) from Rice Junction in St. Cloud, Minn., approximately milepost 0.0 of the Cold Spring line to approximately milepost 9.16 at Rockville, Minn.

NLR states that it has leased the Line from BNSF since 2004.<sup>1</sup> See *N. Lines Ry.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Burlington N. & Santa Fe Ry.*, FD 34627 (STB served Jan. 6, 2005); see also *See N. Lines Ry.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Burlington N. & Santa Fe Ry.*, FD 34627 (STB served June 3, 2005) (clarifying incidental trackage rights). According to NLR, the original lease agreement “has been amended from time to time” since 2004.<sup>2</sup> (Notice 4.) NLR now seeks authority for a new amendment, which “modifies various provisions of the lease, including extending its term.” (*Id.* at 5.)

According to the verified notice, the lease contains an existing interchange commitment. NLR has provided additional information regarding the interchange commitment, as required by 49 CFR 1150.43(h).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NLR notes that the Board’s original decision authorized NLR to lease and operate approximately 22.4 miles of line from BNSF, but NLR received authority to discontinue service over various portions of the original line in later decisions. See *N. Lines Ry.—Discont. of Serv. Exemption—in Stearns Cnty., Minn.*, AB 1011X (STB served June 6, 2007); *N. Lines Ry.—Discont. of Serv. Exemption—in Stearns Cnty., Minn.*, AB 1011 (Sub-No. 1X) (STB served May 20, 2011); *N. Lines Ry.—Discont. of Serv. Exemption—in Stearns Cnty., Minn.*, AB 1011 (Sub-No. 2X) (STB served Mar. 4, 2016); *N. Lines Ry.—Discont. of Serv. Exemption—in Stearns Cnty., Minn.*, AB 1011 (Sub-No. 3X) (STB served Sept. 27, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> NLR states that it did not seek authority from the Board for the previous amendments because it “was unclear at the time” of their execution that they required Board authority. (Notice 4 n.5.) The class exemption invoked by NLR does not provide for retroactive effectiveness. See *San Pedro R.R.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Union Pac. R.R.*, FD 35968, slip op. at 1 n.1 (STB served Nov. 6, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Accompanying the verified notice, and as supplemented in two confidential submissions on

NLR certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not exceed \$5 million annually and will not result the creation of a Class II or Class I carrier.

The transaction may be consummated on or after January 22, 2026, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed).

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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than January 15, 2026 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36891, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing on the Board’s website or in writing addressed to 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on NLR’s representative, Rose-Michele Nardi, Mullins Law Group PLLC, 2001 L Street NW, Suite 720, Washington, DC 20036.

According to NLR, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

Board decisions and notices are available at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: January 6, 2026.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.

**Jeffrey Herzig,**  
*Clearance Clerk.*

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December 9 and 23, 2025, NLR submitted under seal a copy of the lease agreement as amended. See 49 CFR 1150.43(h)(1) (providing that certain information related to interchange commitments, such as copies of agreements, will be kept confidential without an accompanying motion for a protective order). Because submission of the amended lease was not complete until the December 23, 2025 supplement, that is deemed the filed date of the verified notice.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Railroad Administration**

**[Docket No. FRA–2001–11213, Notice No. 30]**

**Drug and Alcohol Testing:  
Determination of Minimum Random  
Testing Rates for 2026**

**AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notification of determination.

**SUMMARY:** This notification of determination announces FRA’s minimum annual random drug and minimum annual random alcohol testing rates for covered service, maintenance-of-way (MOW), and mechanical (MECH) employees for calendar year 2026.

**DATES:** This determination takes effect January 8, 2026.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Gerald Powers, FRA Drug and Alcohol Program Manager, by email: [gerald.powers@dot.gov](mailto:gerald.powers@dot.gov) or by telephone: 202–493–6313; or Melissa Van Dermeir, FRA Drug and Alcohol Program Specialist, by email: [melissavandermeir@dot.gov](mailto:melissavandermeir@dot.gov) or by telephone: 312–720–9491.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Each year, FRA sets its minimum annual random testing rates after considering the last two complete calendar years of railroad industry drug and alcohol program data submitted to its Management Information System (MIS). FRA, however, reserves the right to consider factors other than MIS-reported data before deciding whether to lower annual minimum random testing rates. See 85 FR 81265 (Dec. 15, 2020).

To summarize, FRA is announcing its minimum annual random drug and alcohol testing rates for calendar year 2026 as follows:

—Covered service employee rates will remain at 25 percent for drugs and 10 percent for alcohol.

—MOW employee rates will remain at 25 percent for drugs and 10 percent for alcohol.

—MECH employee rates will remain at 50 percent for drugs but will be lowered to 10 percent for alcohol.

These rates are minimums, and railroad carriers and railroad contractors may conduct FRA random testing at higher rates.

**Discussion****Random Testing Rates for Covered  
Service Employees**

The industry-wide random drug testing positive rate for covered service

employees remained below 1.0 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum annual random drug testing rate for covered service employees will remain at 25 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

The industry-wide random alcohol testing violation rate for covered service employees remained below 0.5 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum random annual alcohol testing rate for covered service employees will remain at 10 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

#### *Random Testing Rates for MOW Employees*

The industry-wide random drug testing positive rate for MOW employees remained below 1.0 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum annual random drug testing rate for MOW employees will remain at 25 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

The industry-wide random alcohol testing violation rate for MOW employees remained below 0.5 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum random alcohol testing rate for MOW employees will remain at 10 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

#### *Random Testing Rates for MECH Employees*

FRA now has industry-wide MIS data from two full consecutive calendar years for MECH employees, who became subject to FRA random drug and alcohol testing in 2022. See 87 FR 5719 (Feb. 2, 2022).

The industry-wide random drug testing positive rate for MECH employees was above 1.0 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum annual random drug testing rate for MECH employees will remain at 50 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

The industry-wide random alcohol testing violation rate for MECH employees was below 0.5 percent for 2023 and 2024. The Administrator has therefore determined the minimum annual random alcohol testing rate for MECH employees will be lowered from 25 percent to 10 percent for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

Issued in Washington, DC.

**David A. Fink,**

*Administrator.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–2025–1060]

#### **Request Notice: Use of Foreign-Built Small Passenger Vessel in United States Coastwise Trade, M/V ODYSSEY**

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by MARAD, is authorized to make determinations regarding the coastwise use of foreign built; certain U.S. built; and U.S. and foreign rebuilt vessels that solely carry no more than twelve passengers for hire. MARAD has received such a determination request and is publishing this notice to solicit comments to assist with determining whether the proposed use of the vessel set forth in the request would have an adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders or U.S. coastwise trade businesses that use U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Information about the requestor's vessel, including a description of the proposed service, is in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before February 9, 2026.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD–2025–1060 by any one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search the above DOT Docket Number and follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Docket Management Facility is in the West Building, Ground Floor of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Docket Management Facility location address is U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

**Note:** If you mail or hand-deliver your comments, we recommend that you include the DOT Docket Number, your name and a mailing address, an email address or a

telephone number in the body of your document so that we can contact you if we have questions regarding your submission.

**Instructions:** All submissions received must include the agency name and specific DOT Docket Number. All comments received will be posted without change to the docket at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), including any personal information provided. For detailed instructions on submitting comments, or to submit comments that are confidential in nature, see the section entitled Public Participation.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Patricia Hagerty, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Mail Stop 2, MAR–620, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366–5400. Email: [smallvessels@dot.gov](mailto:smallvessels@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 12121(b), the U.S. Coast Guard may issue a certificate of documentation with a coastwise trade endorsement for eligible, small passenger vessels authorized to carry no more than 12 passengers for hire if MARAD, after notice and an opportunity for public comment, determines the use of the small passenger vessel in the coastwise trade will not adversely affect United States vessel builders or the coastwise trade business of any person that employs vessels built in the United States in that business.<sup>1</sup>

MARAD has received an eligibility determination request. Further details about the requester's vessel and its proposed operations may be found in the determination request posted in the DOT Docket Number listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the undue adverse effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or coastwise trade businesses in the U.S. that employ U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Comments should refer to the vessel name, state the commenter's interest in the request, and demonstrate, with supporting documentation, the undue adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders and coastwise trade businesses.

### Public Participation

#### *How do I submit comments?*

Please submit comments, including the attachments, following the

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Coast Guard and MARAD have authority under 46 U.S.C. 12121(b) through the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, respectively.