

construction, reconstruction, or acquisition of vessels through the deferment of Federal income taxes on certain deposits of money or property placed into a CCF.

Need and Use of the Information: The collected information is used by the Maritime Administration to determine an applicant's eligibility to enter into a CCF Agreement.

Annual Burden Estimate: The annual burden estimate is 1,996 hours.

2. *Title of Collection:* EUSC/Parent Company.

OMB Control Number: 2133-0511.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved information collection.

Affected Public: Foreign register American vessel owners which complete the information collection and return it to the Maritime Administration.

Abstract: The collection consists of an inventory of information regarding Foreign register vessels owned by Americans. Specifically, this information consists of responses from vessel owners verifying or correcting vessel ownership, data and characteristics found in commercial publications.

Need and Use of the Information: The verification of information on vessels that could be vital in a national or international emergency is essential to the logistical support planning by MARAD's Office of National Security Plans and the Logistics Plans Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. The information will be used for contingency planning for sealift requirements primarily as a source of ships to move essential oil and bulk cargoes in support of the national economy.

Annual Burden Estimate: The annual burden is 46 hours.

Comments Are Invited On—

Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725-17th Street, NW.,

Washington, DC 20503, Attention MARAD Desk Officer.

Issued in Washington, DC on May 13, 1997.

Phillip A. Leach,

Clearance Officer, United States Department of Transportation.

[FR Doc. 97-13203 Filed 5-19-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-62-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Townships of Manns Harbor and Manteo, Dare County, NC

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Rescind notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for a proposed highway project within the townships of Manns Harbor and Manteo and a new crossing of the Croatan Sound, Dare County, North Carolina.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Roy C. Shelton, Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601, Telephone 919/856-4350.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed highway project to improve a portion of US 64-264 from the intersection of US 64 and US 264 west of Manns Harbor to the intersection of US 64 and NC 345 south of Manteo was issued on November 23, 1993 and published in the November 12, 1993 **Federal Register**. The FHWA, in cooperation with North Carolina Department of Transportation, has since determined that preparation of an EIS is not necessary for this proposed highway project and hereby rescinds the previous Notice of Intent.

(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.)

Issued on: May 12, 1997.

Roy C. Shelton,

Operations Engineer, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[FR Doc. 97-13085 Filed 5-19-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. 97-29; Notice 01]

Consumer Information; National Academy of Sciences' Study

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Request for comment.

SUMMARY: This notice summarizes a recent study by the National Academy of Sciences titled "Shopping for Safety—Providing Consumer Automotive Safety Information." The study makes a number of recommendations to NHTSA on ways to improve automobile safety information for consumers. This notice requests comments on NHTSA's response to the recommendations of this study and on programs NHTSA has begun or is considering to address these recommendations. NHTSA is requesting comments because it wishes to develop these programs in cooperation with other interested parties.

DATES: *Comment Date:* Comments must be received by August 18, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket and notice number of this notice and be submitted to: Docket Section, Room 5109, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. (Docket Room hours are 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Versailles, NPS-31, Office of Safety Performance Standards, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Versailles can be reached by phone at (202) 366-2057 or by facsimile at (202) 366-4329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

As part of the agency's regulatory reform commitment, and the formation of the Planning and Review Division in Safety Performance Standards (NPS), a comprehensive review of NHTSA's motor vehicle safety consumer information programs has been undertaken. This activity reflects the agency's increased focus on consumer information complementing the traditional engineering standards focus of its rulemaking function.

In 1994, NHTSA held four town meetings as part of the reform effort. The purpose of these meetings was to let NHTSA hear directly from the public what kind of automobile safety

information they want and how NHTSA can best provide it to them. Based on some of the comments at these meetings, consumers want more information about available safety features, expanded outreach for NHTSA's safety information, and an overall safety rating for vehicles.

As part of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1995 (P.L. 103-331; September 30, 1994), Congress provided NHTSA funds "for a study to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of motor vehicle safety consumer information needs and the most cost effective methods of communicating this information." The NAS study was completed and released to the public on March 26, 1996. It is titled "Shopping for Safety—Providing Consumer Automotive Safety Information," TRB Special Report 248. Based on its findings, the study makes recommendations to NHTSA on ways to improve automobile safety information for consumers. The recommendations are classified in three categories: Improvements to Existing Information, Development of Summary Measures, and Development of a Process to Stimulate Better Consumer Safety Information and Safer Cars.

Using the NAS recommendations and input from the public meetings as a guide, NPS is striving to improve significantly the motor vehicle safety consumer information that NHTSA provides to the American public. This notice summarizes the NAS study and requests comments on NHTSA's response to the recommendations of this study. NHTSA is also requesting comment on some specific ongoing and planned programs that address these recommendations.¹

Improvements to Existing Information

In the short term, the study recommends that NHTSA provide consumers with more explicit information on: the importance of vehicle size and weight; the benefits of (and proper use of) safety features such as seat belts and anti-lock brakes; the frequency of crash types for which test results are available; and the uncertainties associated with crash test results. The study also recommends that NHTSA establish the reliability of crash test results and identify the source(s) of variance in those results. The final short-term recommendation is that NHTSA improve the presentation and

dissemination of existing safety information by increasing awareness of the availability of this information and by making the information more accessible.

NHTSA agrees with all of these recommendations except the recommendation to establish the reliability of crash test results and identify the source(s) of variance in those results. In 1984, NHTSA thoroughly examined this issue with respect to the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) and implemented changes to reduce test variability, such as more consistent placement of the test dummy and the initiation of an instrument auditing system. However, crash tests will always have some variability. A star rating system was introduced for NCAP in 1994. This system further reduces the influence of variability in that vehicles with a range of numerical dummy readings have the same star rating. Usually, the star ratings given by the manufacturer and NHTSA are different only if the vehicle's numerical rating is on the border of the range of scores for a star rating.

NHTSA agrees with the recommendations to provide more consumer information and to improve the presentation and dissemination of consumer information. NHTSA will continue efforts in existing areas, including long-term programs related to the benefits and proper use of safety belts and in more recent efforts to address issues regarding children and air bags. Information on the frequency of various crash types (frontal, side, rear, rollover) are available. NHTSA will look at ways to make that information and other information more accessible by broadening the dissemination outlets that the agency uses.

NHTSA plans improvements to two existing consumer brochures, the Uniform Tire Quality Grading brochure and "Buying a Safer Car." The Uniform Tire Quality Grading brochure was developed in 1986 to provide information to consumers on what they should look for when purchasing new tires. It answers some common questions consumers ask about tire grades, treadwear, traction, and temperature resistance. A final rule was published in September 1996, adding a higher grade for traction. NHTSA plans to update the brochure to include the additional grade and provide consumers with additional tire safety tips. If appropriate, a public service announcement (PSA) may be developed to compliment the information provided in the brochure.

Beginning with model year 1995 vehicles, NHTSA, in cooperation with

the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC), has published the "Buying a Safer Car" brochure. The brochure contains NCAP crash test results and safety feature information for new motor vehicles.

The "Buying a Safer Car" brochure is being updated for model year 1997. For example, the safety feature section will be modified as one feature highlighted in previous brochures, side impact protection, is now mandatory for all vehicles. Also, in its fiscal year 1997 budget, NHTSA received money to conduct side impact testing in a program similar to the NCAP program (this program is referred to as side impact NCAP). The crash test result section will be modified to add crash test results for the new side impact NCAP program.

NHTSA is examining ways to increase the number of copies distributed from previous years. The brochure will be advertised in new areas to reach additional audiences. The NAS study also recommends that safety information be available in dealer showrooms. NHTSA is interested in comments on the usefulness of having this and other safety materials available at the showroom for prospective buyers.

In addition, building on the success of "Buying a Safer Car," a new brochure titled "Buying a Safer Car for Child Passengers" is under development. The brochure will inform consumers on the hazards that air bags present to children and provide advice on other vehicle features that can increase the safety of children in vehicles. The brochure will identify vehicles that have special equipment, such as built-in child seats and manual air bag cut-off switches that enhance children's safety, and discuss features car buyers can watch for to decrease the chance of vehicle/child seat incompatibility. Like "Buying a Safer Car," the agency hopes that the new brochure will be a joint effort with groups such as child transportation safety advocates, AAA, and other national organizations.

NHTSA is also planning other new consumer information programs. One such program would be the development of consumer information materials on preventing motor vehicle theft. Specifically, a theft prevention PSA designed to alert consumers to remove their keys from their vehicle's ignition, to lock the doors, and other tips to prevent vehicle theft will be developed. In addition, a brochure will be created to give consumers information on how they can help deter theft; information on the types of programs in place in various states that

¹ The notice only discusses programs of the Planning and Review division in NPS. Consumer information programs in other NHTSA offices are not discussed.

are helping to reduce and deter vehicle theft, and/or designed to enhance the recovery of vehicles; a list of the top 20 most stolen vehicles; desirable components of an antitheft system; and a list of the vehicle lines with agency-approved antitheft systems.² Again, this could be a collaborative effort between NHTSA and other public and private sector organizations.

Another new project concerns rollover. There are over 200,000 rollover crashes involving light duty passenger vehicles annually. These result in over 9,000 fatalities and over 50,000 serious, incapacitating injuries. Rollover crashes occur for many reasons and involve the interaction of a variety of factors including the driver, the roadway, the vehicle, and environmental conditions. NHTSA is pursuing a broad range of actions to address the rollover problem as part of its comprehensive rollover plan. Many of these actions are of a technical nature, however, consumer information activities which change the behavior of drivers and occupants can also reduce the rollover rate (e.g., driving too fast for road conditions) or can lessen the injuries and fatalities if a rollover occurs (e.g., wearing safety belts). In addition to some of the existing consumer information actions, the agency would like to develop a video to highlight "do's and don'ts" in common situations that result in rollover crashes or increase injuries when a rollover occurs.

With regard to the importance of vehicle size and weight, NHTSA believes that most consumers have an understanding that a larger and/or heavier vehicle is safer for the occupants of that vehicle.³ Some information on effect of vehicle size and weight is included in NHTSA information, for example, NCAP press releases. NHTSA will explore whether anything can be added to this information to make it more useful to consumers. NHTSA is interested in any suggestions for ways to present this information to consumers.

In the area of proper use of vehicle safety features, NHTSA will look at ways to disseminate more information. Educational materials, in the form of

²Manufacturers of vehicles classified as high theft vehicle lines must inscribe or affix vehicle identification numbers on certain major original equipment and replacement parts. Manufacturers may petition NHTSA to exempt high theft vehicle lines from this requirement if all vehicles in the line are equipped, as standard equipment, with an antitheft device that NHTSA has determined is likely to be as effective as parts marking to reduce vehicle theft.

³Conversely, in a collision, a larger, heavier vehicle decreases the safety for occupants of the smaller, lighter vehicle.

PSAs, brochures, and consumer advisories, will be developed to ensure the driver understands correct driving behavior and is able to interact properly with the system. For example, drivers are not fully educated on whether their vehicles have anti-lock brakes (ABS) and, if so, how properly to use these systems. Another area where an educational program can address misuse of safety features is proper use and positioning of head restraints.

NHTSA will continue recent efforts to improve presentation and dissemination of consumer information materials. On November 27, 1996, NHTSA published a final rule amending Standards No. 208 and 213 to require new, attention-getting warning labels for vehicles without advanced passenger-side air bags and for rear-facing child seats. The labels were part of a comprehensive plan the agency is undertaking to reduce the adverse effects of air bags, especially the adverse effects for children. As part of the process leading to these amendments, the agency conducted focus groups to test public reaction to possible changes to the labels. NHTSA will continue to do qualitative research, including focus groups to learn more about what type of information is useful and how it can best be presented. NHTSA believes the use of focus groups in this rulemaking helped to ensure that the information on the labels was understandable to consumers and increased the chance that the labels could affect consumer behavior.

On October 1, 1995, NHTSA introduced a home page on the Internet. This medium has provided the agency with an opportunity to greatly advance automotive safety by enabling people to more easily access agency information. During the first month of 1997, over 8,000 users made over 50,000 queries to the NCAP database on the home page.⁴ The site has been redesigned since its opening to make it more interesting and helpful, and to increase ease of use. However, not everything is complete. NHTSA is continuing to make changes to convert files to more readable documents and will continue to add files to accommodate additional information. NHTSA is interested in working with other organizations that have web sites (e.g., manufacturers, insurance companies, or auto clubs) to provide links between those sites and NHTSA's site.

NHTSA will work with other partners and customers, both internal and external, to provide information to

⁴The first number is much smaller than the second because a single user will typically query the database many times during a user session.

consumers, similar to the successful partnership with the AAA and the FTC to produce the annual "Buying a Safer Car" brochure. NHTSA has found that such activities are more beneficial to all when a more cooperative approach is used to resolve potential safety problems.

Finally, responding to the President's directive for a new approach to the way government interacts with the private sector to improve the regulatory process, several public meetings have been held in the past few years with regard to vehicle-related safety issues. The agency has conducted public meetings on safety issues including mirrors, vehicle lamps and reflective devices, school bus safety, and heavy vehicle safety. Such public outreach meetings will continue to be held in the future.

Development of Summary Measures

In the long term, the study recommends the development of one overall measure that combines relative importance of crashworthiness⁵ and crash avoidance⁶ features for a vehicle. The study recognizes however, that, for the foreseeable future, summary measures of crashworthiness and crash avoidance must be presented separately due to differences in current level of knowledge, and differences in the roles of vehicle and driver in the two areas. For now, the NAS study recommends that the agency develop a summary measure of a vehicle's crashworthiness which incorporates quantitative information supplemented with the professional judgment of automotive experts, statisticians, and decision analysts. NHTSA should provide information with this measure to reflect the range of uncertainty in those judgments. For crash avoidance, the study recommends the development of a checklist of features for the near future.

The study also recommends that NHTSA present consumer information in a hierarchically organized approach. Such an approach would have the most highly summarized information on a vehicle label with a graphical display or on a checklist. This could be part of the current labels on new vehicles, or, preferably, a separate label focusing on safety information. The next level of information would be an accompanying brochure with more detailed explanations of the summary measures, information on the assumptions used in those calculations, etc. The most

⁵Crashworthiness refers to a vehicle's ability to protect occupants from serious injury or death when a crash occurs.

⁶Crash avoidance refers to a vehicle's ability to prevent a crash from occurring.

detailed level would be a handbook with complete comparisons of all vehicles.

Other longer term recommendations are the development of a multichannel approach to the dissemination of information, including NHTSA's Auto Safety Hotline, the Internet, asking the insurance industry and automobile clubs to include information in their mailings, having NHTSA information printed in consumer journals, having safety information included in driver education courses, and public service announcements. The NAS study also recommends that the agency conduct research into consumer decision making and safety information requirements. The research would examine how consumers conceptualize auto safety, how consumers use safety information in choosing a vehicle, and how safety information can best be communicated and disseminated.

NHTSA agrees in principle with all of these recommendations. Surveys of new car buyers indicate that safety has become an important factor in new car purchase decisions.⁷ In fact, over 75 percent of the respondents in a recent NHTSA customer survey indicated that safety was a "very important" consideration in their vehicle purchase decision. As the NAS study points out, "little systematic information is available on what consumers believe or understand about vehicle safety, or how and when they think about safety in choosing a vehicle." Accordingly, as recommended by the NAS study, research efforts will be conducted to determine what consumers believe about vehicle safety, how they think about safety in buying a vehicle, what information is most important, and how it can be best presented. The results of this research will provide the foundation for the development of NPS' future motor vehicle safety consumer information activities.

NHTSA plans to conduct the research in two phases. In the first phase, the project will examine what consumers believe or understand about vehicle safety, their level of awareness of vehicle safety information and where such information is available, and how (if at all) they use such information in their decision to buy a particular vehicle. In the second phase, NHTSA will attempt to determine the most effective public information strategies and messages for reaching consumers through various media. Research will be conducted to determine what vehicle safety information is most helpful to

consumers, how it can be best presented, and how can it best be introduced into the car-buying process.

In fiscal year 1992, Congress asked NHTSA to provide consumers with easily understandable vehicle safety performance information. As a result of this request, beginning with model year 1994 vehicles, NHTSA has presented NCAP data using a star rating system. The system represents a vehicle's relative level of crash protection in a head-on collision, combining both head and chest injury data.

For the first year of the new side impact NCAP program, NHTSA is using a star rating system. NHTSA is studying the possibility of combining frontal NCAP and side impact NCAP ratings into a single rating. This single rating would represent the vehicle's relative level of crash protection in both a head-on and side collision. Such a program could be a first step to a summary crashworthiness rating. Additional tests being researched by NHTSA now or in the future (e.g., offset frontal) could be added to such a rating in the future. The agency plans to perform research to determine whether consumers would find a combined rating useful and whether information conveyed by the star rating system is easily comprehended.

In addition to the project to combine frontal NCAP and side impact NCAP data into a single rating, the agency has considered a number of approaches to exploring the NAS study recommendation that a comprehensive crashworthiness rating be developed. One approach would be a Federal Advisory Committee to develop a method that the agency or others could use to "rate" new vehicles. Such method would indicate what quantitative information should be used (both from NHTSA and from other sources), how such information should be combined, and how such information would be supplemented with expert judgement. Such a committee would have to be formally chartered before this action could begin. If a Federal Advisory Committee were used, the committee's recommendations would be advisory only.

Another option would be for NHTSA to conduct a negotiated rulemaking. If an agreement as to a method were reached under this option, NHTSA would agree to propose a new consumer information regulation. However, a regulatory approach may be less desirable, as rulemaking to amend the regulation would have to be conducted whenever the state of knowledge is advanced enough to allow more defensible information and less expert

judgement to be used in the rating system. NHTSA is particularly interested in comments on the process NHTSA should use to explore this recommendation.

NHTSA has considered another alternative to the rating recommended by the NAS study. That alternative would involve the development of a standard means by which manufacturers would establish the degree to which a specific vehicle make/model exceeded the minimum requirements in the safety standards. Consumers would be able to use such information to make their own comparisons of various vehicles.

With respect to the NAS study recommendation to develop a list of important crash avoidance features, NHTSA is considering going slightly beyond the study's recommendation. In developing the recommendations, the NAS study committee conducted a survey to test reaction to two summary rating labels. The crash avoidance information on both of the sample labels used by NAS provides comparative information on some crash avoidance features, rather than indicating only the presence or absence of the feature. This suggests that the NAS recommendation to develop a list of crash avoidance features is not the goal, but a beginning in a process to develop more specific information for consumers on the crash avoidance capabilities of vehicles.

Using the new vehicle models to be crash tested in the NCAP program, NHTSA believes that some comparative crash avoidance information can be obtained. Prior to the crash test, additional tests could be performed on these vehicles without affecting the vehicles' usefulness for NCAP testing. Examples of such information would be comparative information on a vehicle's braking ability or lighting. In the area of braking, NHTSA plans to evaluate performance on curves with different peak coefficients of friction, as well as straight-line stopping distances on dry pavement. With respect to lighting, NHTSA plans to evaluate work that has been done by the industry to quantitatively assess how pleasing a headlamp beam pattern will be to vehicle purchasers. This would make additional comparative information on these vehicles available to consumers. The agency is interested in comments on the usefulness of comparative crash avoidance information and the type of information most desired by consumers. Based on the response received, research will be conducted to develop test protocols for additional attributes that could be measured on future NCAP vehicles.

⁷National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1995 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

NHTSA particularly supports the NAS study's recommendation that consumer information be provided in different, hierarchical, levels of detail. First, NHTSA requests comments on the NAS study recommendation that safety information be labeled on new vehicles. Specifically, NHTSA asks about the preference for a new label separate from existing labels. If a respondent does not believe that this information should be on a vehicle label, NHTSA asks for comments on alternative means to provide this information to consumers.

In addition, NHTSA is concerned that the owner's manual currently may contain too much and too detailed information for consumers to be able to locate the most important safety tips they should know and follow. Some manufacturers currently use a "safety card," similar to the card found in airline passenger seat pockets to alert consumers to critical safety information. Using focus groups, NHTSA will explore the usefulness of such a card. We will also test ways to devise a format for such a card and how best to disseminate it. NHTSA plans to look at existing owner's manual requirements, especially those paired with a labeling requirement. Since many of these paired requirements are for the same information, NHTSA requests comments on whether the information should be solely in the owner's manual, solely on the label, or if the agency should require the owner's manual to present additional, more detailed information on the subject covered by the label.

Development of a Process to Stimulate Better Consumer Safety Information and Safer Cars

The final recommendation of the study is the development of an organizational structure to create and disseminate consumer safety information and to provide a process to continuously improve the measures used to report vehicle performance and safety and, as a result, lead to safer cars. The study lists six attributes of a successful organization to achieve these ends: involvement of the major stakeholders (NHTSA, manufacturers, insurance industry, consumer groups), balance between responsiveness and independence, openness, continuity, funding, and feasibility. The study then lists the following five possible institutional arrangements: operation through existing NHTSA programs; operation through a new NHTSA Federal Advisory Committee (FAC); creation of a new public-private automotive safety institute; operation through the private sector; and operation through nongovernmental

organizations (i.e., public interest groups). The study concludes that the two institutional arrangements with the highest probability of success are a new NHTSA FAC or a new public-private institute.

For the immediate future, NHTSA will try to implement the recommendations of the NAS study through existing NHTSA programs, in particular the Planning and Review Division in the Office of Safety Performance Standards. NHTSA is not as skeptical as the NAS study about the chance of success with this approach, particularly as some named drawbacks are not inherent in the approach. For example, one named drawback involved the lack of participation of major stakeholders. However, in the rulemaking area, NHTSA is required by Federal law to provide notice of any action it is considering and to address any relevant comments received in response to that notice. Thus, in that area there is a process to allow all interested parties to participate. As noted in some of the discussions above, NHTSA also tries to ensure participation from outside interests in other projects even when not statutorily required. NHTSA believes it can at least reduce the effect of the named drawbacks by being aware of them when undertaking projects in this area.

If a Federal Advisory Committee is used as the means to develop a summary crashworthiness measure, that activity will also allow NHTSA and other interested parties to evaluate the possibility of the use of a FAC for a broader approach to implementing the recommendations of the study. NHTSA is concerned about the recommendation to create a public-private institute. First, as the study notes, such an activity would have a long start-up period and other approaches would be necessary in the interim. Second, while some of the stakeholders may be able to finance a large share of the costs of such an institute (i.e., manufacturers), others do not have such resources (i.e., consumer groups). Thus, NHTSA is concerned about whether the interests of all stakeholders could be fairly represented. However, NHTSA is interested in comments on any of the approaches addressed in the study, or in suggestions for other approaches.

Specific Requests for Comments

When commenting on this notice, the agency requests that respondents address the following:

(1) Indicate whether or not you support each NAS recommendation and the reasons why.

(2) Identify those cases where you believe NHTSA's response to a NAS recommendation and/or NHTSA's planned consumer information activities to address the recommendation are inadequate or inappropriate. Discuss the basis for your position, in particular, if you believe NHTSA's response is inadequate, discuss what you believe is an appropriate response.

(3) Identify additional actions not recommended by NAS that you believe NHTSA should undertake to improve motor vehicle safety consumer information.

(4) Identify actions your organization would be willing to take, alone or in collaboration with NHTSA, to assist in implementing the NAS recommendations and improving motor vehicle safety consumer information.

Submission of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on this notice. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

Comments must not exceed 15 pages in length. (49 CFR 553.21). Necessary attachments may be appended to these submissions without regard to the 15-page limit. This limitation is intended to encourage respondents to detail their primary arguments in a concise fashion.

If a respondent wishes to submit certain information under a claim of confidentiality, three copies of the complete submission, including purportedly confidential business information, should be submitted to the Chief Counsel, NHTSA, at the street address given above, and seven copies from which the purportedly confidential information has been deleted should be submitted to the Docket Section. A request for confidentiality should be accompanied by a cover letter setting forth the information specified in the agency's confidential business information regulation (49 CFR Part 512).

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above will be considered and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Comments will be available for inspection in the docket. The NHTSA will continue to file relevant information as it becomes available in the docket after the closing date, and it is recommended that interested persons continue to examine the docket for new material.

Those persons desiring to be notified upon receipt of their comments in the docket should enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the envelope with their comments. Upon receiving the comments, the docket supervisor will return the postcard by mail.

Issued on May 14, 1997.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 97-13185 Filed 5-15-97; 3:08 pm]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Sec. 5a Application No. 118 (Amendment No. 1), et al. ¹]

EC-MAC Motor Carriers Service Association, Inc., et al.

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Request for additional comments.

SUMMARY: The Board is seeking additional comments from interested persons on the consolidated applications of seven regional motor carrier rate bureaus for authority to expand their activities nationwide. The Board notes that, as part of its evaluation of whether the scope of the regional rate bureaus' antitrust immunity should be expanded, it will begin the process of addressing whether it should renew all current motor carrier rate bureau agreements prior to their statutory expiration (absent renewal) on December 31, 1998.

DATES: Comments are due by August 18, 1997. Replies are due by October 17, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of pleadings referring to Sec. 5a

¹ This notice embraces six other motor carrier rate bureau applications. Traditionally, such applications have been identified as "Section 5a" applications, in reference to section 5a of the Interstate Commerce Act as it existed prior to its 1978 codification. The "Section 5a Application" numbers, application amendment numbers, and bureau names for the embraced applications are: Sec. 5a Application No. 34 (Amendment No. 8), *Middlewest Motor Freight Bureau, Inc.*; Sec. 5a Application No. 46 (Amendment No. 20), *Southern Motor Carriers Rate Conference, Inc.*; Sec. 5a Application No. 22 (Amendment No. 7), *Pacific Inland Tariff Bureau, Inc.*; Sec. 5a Application No. 60 (Amendment No. 10), *Rocky Mountain Motor Tariff Bureau, Inc.*; Sec. 5a Application No. 45 (Amendment No. 13), *Niagara Frontier Tariff Bureau, Inc.*; and Sec. 5a Application No. 25 (Amendment No. 8), *The New England Motor Rate Bureau, Inc.*. Certain minor issues in Sec. 5a Application No. 46 (Amendment No. 20), *Southern Motor Carriers Rate Conference*, are also the subject of a separate **Federal Register** notice being published simultaneously.

Application No. 118 (Amendment No. 1), et al. to: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

Also, send one copy to the representative of each applicant in Sec. 5a Application No. 118 (Amendment No. 1), et al.:

1. EC-MAC Motor Carriers Service Association, Inc., John W. McFadden, Jr., Suite 1302, 2200 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201.

2. Middlewest Motor Freight Bureau, Inc., Bryce Rea, Jr./William E. Kenworthy, #420, 1920 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

3. Niagara Frontier Tariff Bureau, Inc., Robert G. Gawley, P.O. Box 548, Buffalo, NY 14225-0548.

4. Pacific Inland Tariff Bureau, Inc., Bryce Rea, Jr./William E. Kenworthy, #420, 1920 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

5. Rocky Mountain Motor Tariff Bureau, Inc., Don R. Devine, No. 2, 10 Lakeside Lane, Denver, CO 80212.

6. Southern Motor Carriers Rate Conference, Inc., S.D. Schwartzberg, 1307 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30309; John R. Bagileo, Bagileo, Silverberg & Goldman, #120, 1101 30th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007.

7. The New England Motor Rate Bureau, Inc., Keith Vaskelionis, Sr., 128 Wheeler Road, Burlington, MA 01803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board's decision in these proceedings is available to all persons for a charge by phoning DC NEWS & DATA, INC., at (202) 289-4357.

Decided: May 7, 1997.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-13163 Filed 5-19-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33383]

Illinois Central Corporation and Illinois Central Railroad Company—Corporate Family Transaction Exemption

Illinois Central Corporation, a noncarrier holding company (IC Corp.) and Illinois Central Railroad Company

(ICR), a Class I rail carrier,¹ have jointly filed a verified notice of exemption. IC Corp. has formed a new subsidiary in the State of Illinois known as the IC Railroad Acquisition Company (ICAC). ICR will be merged into ICAC, with ICAC as the surviving entity.

The transaction is to be consummated on or after May 14, 1997.² The transaction will allow the reincorporation of ICR in the State of Illinois and will more closely align ICR's corporate structure with its existing business and operations.

The creation of the new subsidiary ICAC and the merger of ICR into ICAC are transactions within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). The parties state that the transaction will not result in changes in service levels, operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers outside the corporate family.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees adversely affected by the transaction will be protected under *New York Dock Ry.—Control—Brooklyn Eastern Dist.*, 360 I.C.C. 60 (1979).

If the verified 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 reopen will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33383, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Miles L. Tobin, Esq., Illinois Central Railroad Company, 455 North Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago, IL 60611-5504.

Decided: May 13, 1997.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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¹ ICR, a Delaware corporation, is a wholly owned subsidiary of IC Corp. ICR controls and operates the Waterloo Railway Company (WLO), a Class III rail carrier, and also owns non-controlling stock interests in 5 switching and terminal railroads.

² Upon consummation, ICAC will become a wholly owned rail carrier subsidiary of IC Corp and the parent of WLO. In addition, ICAC will be renamed Illinois Central Railroad Company.