

ACTION: Decision No. 19; Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment and 30-day public comment period.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) issued a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the proposed acquisition of control of Illinois Central Corporation and its railroad affiliates (IC) by Canadian National Railway Company (CN). The Draft EA is available for public review and comment for 30 days. Public comments are due by December 11, 1998. Any interested party may request a copy of the Draft EA or submit comments on the Draft EA by following the procedures discussed below. The Draft EA addresses potential acquisition-related environmental impacts and includes SEA's preliminary environmental mitigation recommendations. In addition, the Draft EA includes a Safety Integration Plan prepared by CN and IC that explains how they propose to safely integrate their separate operations if the Board approves the proposed acquisition. After fully considering all public comments, SEA will consult with appropriate public agencies and conduct additional environmental analysis, as appropriate, in preparing a Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA). SEA plans to issue the Final EA prior to the Board's Oral Argument and Voting Conference, which are currently scheduled for March 1999. In making its final decision on the proposed acquisition, the Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments; the Draft EA; and the Final EA, including SEA's environmental mitigation recommendations. The Board plans to serve the final written decision on May 25, 1999. Any party may file an administrative appeal within 20 days of the Board's final written decision.

DATES: The Draft EA is available for public review and comment for 30 days. Public comments are due by December 11, 1998.

ADDRESSES: All interested agencies, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to comment on the Draft EA by submitting written comments (include an original plus 10 copies) to the address listed below by December 11, 1998, the close of the comment period:

Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, Finance Docket No. 33556, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-001, Attn: Elaine K. Kaiser,

Environmental Project Director,
Environmental Filing

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request a copy of the Draft EA or further information on the proposed CN/IC acquisition, interested parties may call SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-888-869-1997 (TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695), or access SEA's website for the CN/IC acquisition at <http://www.cnicacquisition.com>. For additional information regarding environmental issues, or the environmental review process, contact SEA's Project Manager for the proposed CN/IC acquisition, Michael Dalton, at (202) 565-1530.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 15, 1998, CN and IC, collectively referred to as CN/IC or applicants, filed a joint application¹ with the Board seeking authority for CN to acquire control of IC. The proposed CN/IC system would extend to both the east and west coasts of North America and the Gulf of Mexico. The Chicago area would serve as the hub of the combined system. This new system would cover approximately 18,670 miles of rail lines and related facilities, of which approximately 4,520 miles would be in the United States. The applicants state that integrating CN and IC operations would allow both rail systems to provide more reliable, efficient, and competitive service. The applicants also state that they anticipate relatively minor changes in rail operations as a result of the proposed acquisition. The applicants have proposed no rail line abandonments and only five minor construction projects (one rail line connection and four rail yard bypass tracks) as part of the proposed acquisition.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-29981 Filed 11-6-98; 8:45 am]

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¹ Canadian National Railway Company, Grand Trunk Corporation, and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—Control—Illinois Central Corporation, Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chicago, Central and Pacific Railroad Company, and Cedar River Railroad Company, STB Finance Docket No. 33556.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-531 (Sub-No. 2X)]

Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—in Hampshire County, MA

Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc. (PVRR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately 0.26-mile line of railroad from milepost 9.40 at the Easthampton/Southampton border to milepost 9.14 at the south side of Coleman Road in Southampton, Hampshire County, MA. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 01073.

PVRR has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic formerly handled on the line can be rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed. Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on December 10, 1998, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by November 20, 1998. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by November 30, 1998, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Thomas J. Litwiler, Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly, Two Prudential Plaza, 45th Floor, 180 North Stetson Avenue, Chicago, IL 60601.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

PVRR has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by November 13, 1998. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), PVRR shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by PVRR's filing of a notice of consummation by November 10, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

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

Decided: November 3, 1998.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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² Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

November 2, 1998.

The Department of the Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before December 9, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

Departmental Offices/Office of Foreign Assets Control

OMB Number: 1505-0169.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Sudanese Sanctions Regulations.

Description: Submissions will provide the United States Government with information to be used in implementing Executive Order 13067 and enforcing sanctions against the Government of Sudan. These information collections will assist in controlling financial transactions involving the Government of Sudan.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, Individuals or households, Not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents/Recordkeepers: 50.

Estimated Burden Hours Per Respondent/Recordkeeper: 2 hours.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Total Reporting/Recordkeeping Burden: 100 hours.

Clearance Officer: Lois K. Holland (202) 622-1563, Departmental Offices, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220

OMB Reviewer: Alexander T. Hunt (202) 395-7860, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10202, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Lois K. Holland,

Departmental Reports Management Officer.

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BILLING CODE 4810-25-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

November 2, 1998.

The Department of the Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before December 9, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF)

OMB Number: 1512-0546.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Certification on Agency Letterhead Authorizing Purchase of Firearm for Official Duties of Law Enforcement Officer.

Description: This letter is used by a law enforcement officer to purchase handguns to be used in his/her official duties from a licensed firearm dealer anywhere in the country. The letter shall state that the firearm is to be used in the official duties of the officer and that he/she has been checked that he/she has not been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. The letter will be retained for at least five years in the licensee's records.

Respondents: State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Recordkeepers: 50,000.

Estimated Burden Hours Per Recordkeeper: 5 seconds.

Frequency of Response: Other (5 years).

Estimated Total Recordkeeping Burden: 25 hours.

Clearance Officer: Robert N. Hogarth, (202) 927-8930, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Room 3200, 650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20226.

OMB Reviewer: Alexander T. Hunt, (202) 395-7860, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10202, New