

so it may be presented to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official.

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), each exemption will be valid for 2 years unless revoked earlier by the FMCSA. The exemption will be revoked if: (1) The person fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the exemption; (2) the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136. If the exemption is still effective at the end of the 2-year period, the person may apply to the FMCSA for a renewal under procedures in effect at that time.

Issued on: January 13, 2003.

Brian M. McLaughlin,

Associate Administrator for Policy and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 03-1135 Filed 1-16-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34285]

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co.—Acquisition Exemption—Soo Line Railroad Company d/b/a Canadian Pacific Railway

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co. (WSOR), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire from Soo Line Railroad Company d/b/a Canadian Pacific Railway approximately 32.5 miles of rail line known as the Waterloo Spur, extending between milepost 132.11 at Watertown, WI, and milepost 164.61 in Madison, WI. WSOR states that it has been leasing and operating the line since 1998,¹ and that the sole purpose of this transaction will merely be to convert its leasehold interest into an ownership interest, with no adverse effects on railroad employees.

WSOR certifies that its projected revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier.

WSOR states that it expects to consummate the transaction shortly after January 1, 2003.²

¹ See *Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co.—Lease and Operation Exemption—Soo Line Railroad Company d/b/a Canadian Pacific Railway*, STB Finance Docket No. 33571 (STB served May 27, 1998).

² Because WSOR's annual revenues exceed \$5 million, it filed a petition on November 26, 2002, requesting waiver of the Board's notice requirements at 49 CFR 1150.42(e). WSOR

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 does not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34285, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on John D. Heffner, 555 12th Street, NW., Suite 950N, Washington, DC 20004.

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

Decided: January 13, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-1137 Filed 1-16-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34294]

State of Vermont—Acquisition Exemption—Certain Assets of Newport and Richford Railroad Company, Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated and Canadian American Railroad Company

The State of Vermont (Vermont) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire from the Estates of Newport and Richford Railroad Company, Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated and Canadian American Railroad Company (collectively, the Sellers),¹ the Sellers' rights, title and ownership interest in the right-of-way, trackage and other physical assets of a 61.58-mile rail line, extending between milepost 63.58 in

indicated there that it needed to consummate the acquisition no later than December 31, 2002, because the institution funding the acquisition had to close the transaction by the end of the 2002 calendar year. WSOR's request was granted by decision served December 20, 2002. However, by facsimile filed on January 8, 2003, WSOR now indicates that, due to a financing-related delay, it does not anticipate closing the transaction until some time in January or early February 2003.

¹ The Sellers are railroads in the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company (BAR) rail system. On August 15, 2001, an involuntary petition for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act was filed against BAR before the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maine (Court). On May 14, 2002, the Sellers, filed voluntary petitions for relief under chapter 11 before the Court.

Newbury (Wells River) and milepost 2.0 in Newport, in Orange, Caledonia and Orleans Counties, VT (the Subject Line).² The Sellers will retain the rights and obligations to provide common carrier service on the line. In a separate transaction, the Sellers will convey the retained common carrier obligation and right to provide service to the Washington County Railroad Company (WCRC) through an exclusive operating easement.³

Consummation of the transaction was expected to occur on December 26, 2002 (7 days after the exemption was filed), but not before Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. has consummated its acquisition of certain other rail assets belonging to the BAR rail system in Vermont and Maine.⁴

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.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34294, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Edward J. Fishman, Kirkpatrick & Lockhart LLP, 1800 Massachusetts Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20036-1221.

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

Decided: January 13, 2003.

² Vermont simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss this notice of exemption. The motion will be handled in a separate decision.

³ WCRC has contemporaneously filed a notice of exemption in *Washington County Railroad Company—Acquisition and Operation—Certain Rights of Newport and Richford Railroad Company, Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated and Canadian American Railroad Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 34302, to acquire an exclusive operating easement on the Subject Line.

⁴ In *Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Bangor & Aroostook Railroad Company, Canadian American Railroad Company, the Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated, Newport & Richford Railroad Company and Van Buren Bridge Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 34110 (STB served Sept. 19, 2002), Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, LLC (MM&A—LLC) was authorized to acquire and operate, among other things, some 518 miles of BAR's rail lines and other assets in Maine and Vermont. These assets do not include the Subject Line. In a subsequent decision served on December 18, 2002, the Board granted a motion to substitute Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. as the party that may acquire and operate these assets in lieu of MM&A—LLC.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-1148 Filed 1-16-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34302]

Washington County Railroad Company—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Certain Rights of Newport and Richford Railroad Company, Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated and Canadian American Railroad Company

The Washington County Railroad Company (WCRC) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire from the Estates of Newport and Richford Railroad Company (N&R), Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated (NVT) and Canadian American Railroad Company (CDAC) (collectively, the Sellers),¹ an exclusive operating easement on a 61.58-mile rail line, extending between milepost 63.58 in Newbury (Wells River) and milepost 2.0 in Newport, in Orange, Caledonia and Orleans Counties, VT (the Wells River-Newport Line).² WCRC also seeks to acquire from CDAC, by assignment, an exclusive operating easement over a connecting 40-mile line of railroad extending between approximately milepost 123 in Hartford (White River Junction) and milepost 163 in Newbury (Wells River), VT (the White River Junction-Wells River Line).³ As a result

of these transactions, WCRC will have the right and obligation to provide common carrier service on a combined 101.58-mile rail line between Hartford and Newport, VT pursuant to the exclusive operating easements.

Consummation of the transaction was expected to occur on December 26, 2002 (7 days after the exemption was filed), but not before Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. has consummated its acquisition of certain other rail assets belonging to the BAR rail system in Vermont and Maine.⁴

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.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34302, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on David W. Wulfson, Washington County Railroad Company, One Railway Lane, Burlington, VT 05401-5290.

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

Decided: January 13, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-1149 Filed 1-16-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34300]

Jeffrey L. Sutch and Leonard J. Smolsky-Intracorporate Family Transaction Exemption

Jeffrey L. Sutch and Leonard J. Smolsky (Applicants), have filed a verified notice of exemption to merge Penn-Jersey Lines, Inc. (PJRL) into SMS Rail Service, Inc. (SLRS) with SLRS as the surviving entity.¹

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or after December 27, 2002, the effective date of the exemption (7 days after the notice was filed).

The proposed merger transaction will eliminate the administrative expense of maintaining two separate organizations, thus reducing the operating costs of each. The merger will permit the consolidation of the railroads' equipment, their locomotives and cars, thus resulting in improved service to the shippers served by the two railroads.

This is a transaction within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). The Applicants state that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers outside the 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 railroad carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under that statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

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 transaction.

¹ See *Penn-Jersey Rail Lines Inc.—Acquisition and Operations Exemption—WMI Properties, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33414 (STB served June 24, 1997); *SMS Rail Service, Inc.—Lease and Operate Exemption—Pureland Association, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 32494 (STB served May 26, 1994); and *Jeffrey L. Sutch and Leonard J. Smolsky—Continuance in Control Exemption—Penn-Jersey Rail Lines, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33415 (STB served June 24, 1997).

Both PJRL and SLRS are Class III carriers. PJRL's lines are in Pennsylvania. SLRS's lines are in New Jersey.

¹ The Sellers are railroads in the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company (BAR) rail system. On August 15, 2001, an involuntary petition for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act was filed against BAR before the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maine (Court). On May 14, 2002, the Sellers, filed voluntary petitions for relief under chapter 11 before the Court.

² In a related matter, the State of Vermont (Vermont) has contemporaneously filed a notice of exemption in *State of Vermont—Acquisition—Certain Assets of Newport and Richford Railroad Company, Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated and Canadian American Railroad Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 34294, to acquire the Sellers' rights, title and ownership interest in the right-of-way, trackage and other physical assets on the Wells River-Newport Line. Vermont simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss that notice of exemption. The motion will be handled in a separate decision.

³ The Wells River-Newport Line connects with the White River Junction-Wells River Line at Wells River (despite the difference in milepost designations, which is the result of different milepost systems). Vermont already owns the White River Junction-Wells River Line. See *State of*

Vermont—Acquisition Exemption—Certain Assets of Boston and Maine Corporation, STB Finance Docket No. 33830 (STB served Dec. 20, 1999).

⁴ In *Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Bangor & Aroostook Railroad Company, Canadian American Railroad Company, the Northern Vermont Railroad Company Incorporated, Newport & Richford Railroad Company and Van Buren Bridge Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 34110 (STB served Sept. 19, 2002), Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway LLC (MM&A) was authorized to acquire and operate, among other things, certain rail lines and other assets of the Seller in Maine and Vermont not including the Subject Line. In a subsequent decision served on December 18, 2002, the Board granted a motion to substitute Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. as the party that may acquire and operate the BAR system assets in lieu of Montreal Maine & Atlantic Railway LLC.