

than December 1, 1997, Marc C. Owen, Advisory Board Liaison, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590; 202-366-6823.

Any member of the public may present a written statement to the Advisory Board at any time.

Issued at Washington, D.C. on November 24, 1997.

**Marc C. Owen,**

*Advisory Board Liaison.*

[FR Doc. 97-31354 Filed 11-28-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-61-M

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33511]

#### **Emons Transportation Group, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Penn Eastern Rail Lines, Inc.**

Emons Transportation Group, Inc. (Emons), has filed a notice of exemption to continue in control of Penn Eastern Rail Lines, Inc. (PERL), upon PERL's becoming a Class III railroad. The transaction was expected to be consummated on or about November 20, 1997, the effective date of the exemption.

This transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 33512, *Penn Eastern Rail Lines, Inc.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Lines of Lancaster Northern Railway, Inc., Chester Valley Railway, Inc., East Penn Railways, Inc., and Bristol Industrial Terminal Railway, Inc.*, wherein PERL seeks to acquire and operate certain rail lines from Lancaster Northern Railway, Inc., Chester Valley Railway, Inc., East Penn Railways, Inc., and Bristol Industrial Terminal Railway, Inc.

Emons controls through stock ownership three other Class III rail carriers: Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad Company, operating 26 miles of rail line between York and Hanover, PA; Yorkrail, Inc., operating approximately 16 miles of rail line between York and Porters Sideling, PA; and, St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad Company, operating between Portland, ME, and the Canadian border at Norton, VT.

Emons states that: (1) PERL will not connect with any of the other railroads in its corporate family; (2) the continuance in control is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect PERL with any other railroad in its corporate family; and (3) the transaction does not involve a Class I railroad. The transaction therefore is

exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. See 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2).

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 the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

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. 33511, 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: Kevin M. Sheys, Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly, 1020 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036.

Decided: November 21, 1997.

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

**Vernon A. Williams,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 97-31385 Filed 11-28-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33512]

#### **Penn Eastern Rail Lines, Inc.; Acquisition and Operation Exemption; Lines of Lancaster Northern Railway, Inc., Chester Valley Railway, Inc., East Penn Railways, Inc., and Bristol Industrial Terminal Railway, Inc.**

Penn Eastern Rail Lines, Inc. (PERL), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire (by purchase of certain rail lines and assignment of certain leases on other rail lines) and operate approximately 45.24<sup>1</sup> miles of rail lines (the Subject Lines) of Lancaster Northern Railway, Inc. (LANO), Chester

<sup>1</sup> In the verified notice of exemption, PERL states that the total miles of rail line to be acquired and operated totals approximately 44 route miles, but other references in the notice, which identify the mileposts and the route miles for each specific segment of rail line, total approximately 45.24 route miles.

Valley Railway, Inc. (CVR), East Penn Railways, Inc. (EPRY), and Bristol Industrial Terminal Railway, Inc. (Bristol). PERL will become a Class III rail carrier.<sup>2</sup>

PERL, LANO, CVR, EPRY and Bristol have entered into an agreement providing for PERL's acquisition of all the rights, title and interests in the Subject Lines. PERL intends to consummate the purchase agreement and begin operations on or soon after November 20, 1997, the effective date of the exemption.

CVR owns and operates the Bridgeport Industrial Track, between the connection with the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) at approximately milepost 0.0 and milepost 2.14 at Henderson Road. This 2.14-mile rail line is located entirely within Bridgeport, Montgomery County, PA.

LANO owns and operates the Akron Secondary Track, between approximately milepost 0.05 at Sinking Spring, Berks County, PA, and the end of the track at Stevens, approximately milepost 12.94, in Lancaster County, PA.

EPRY operates four rail lines as follows: (1) The Perkiomen Branch, USRA Line No. 906, between milepost 22.38 at Pennsburg, PA, and milepost 38.23 at Emmaus Jct., Emmaus, PA, a distance of 15.85 miles, in Berks, Lehigh, and Montgomery Counties, PA; (2) the Colebrookdale Industrial Track (Boyertown Branch), USRA Line No. 909, between milepost 0.00 at Colebrookdale Jct. (Pottstown), PA and milepost 8.60 at Boyertown, PA, a distance of 8.60 miles, in Berks and Montgomery Counties, PA; (3) the Kutztown Branch, USRA line No. 910, between milepost 0.17 at Topton, PA, and milepost 4.29 at Kutztown, PA, a distance of 4.12 miles, in Berks County, PA; and (4) the Mt. Hope Industrial Branch, USRA Line No. 916, between milepost 0.36 and milepost 1.0, a distance of .64 miles, in Manheim, Lancaster County, PA. The lines were acquired by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1982 and were formerly operated by Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad Company.<sup>3</sup> They connect with Conrail at Emmaus, Pottstown, Topton and Manheim, PA.

Bristol leases and operates approximately 1 mile of rail line

<sup>2</sup> This proceeding is related to STB Finance Docket No. 33511, wherein Emons Transportation Group, Inc., a noncarrier, has filed a notice of exemption to continue in control of PERL upon PERL's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

<sup>3</sup> See Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad Company—Modified Rail Certificate, Finance Docket No. 30305 (Sub-No. 1) (ICC served June 13, 1990).

extending between a connection at Grundy and a point within the Bristol Industrial Park, in Bristol Township, Bucks County, PA.

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. 33512, 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: Kevin M. Sheys, Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly, 1020 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036.

Decided: November 21, 1997.

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

**Vernon A. Williams,**

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-31384 Filed 11-28-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Internal Revenue Service

#### Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Notice 97-66

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

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

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Notice 97-66, Certain Payments Made Pursuant to a Securities Lending Transaction.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before January 30, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue Service, room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection should be directed to Carol Savage,

(202) 622-3945, Internal Revenue Service, room 5569, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Title:** Certain Payments Made Pursuant to a Securities Lending Transaction.

**OMB Number:** 1545-1566.

**Notice Number:** Notice 97-66.

**Abstract:** Notice 97-66 modifies final regulations which were effective November 14, 1997. The Notice relaxes the statement requirement with respect to substitute interest payments relating to securities loans and sale-repurchase transactions. It also provides a withholding mechanism to eliminate excessive withholding on multiple payments in a chain of substitute dividend payments.

**Current Actions:** There are no changes being made to the notice at this time.

**Type of Review:** Extension of a currently approved collection.

**Affected Public:** Business or other for-profit organizations.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 377,500.

**Estimated Time Per Respondent:** 10 minutes.

**Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:** 61,750.

The following paragraph applies to all of the collections of information covered by this notice:

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential, as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

**Request for Comments:** Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital

or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Approved: November 18, 1997.

**Garrick R. Shear,**

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-31402 Filed 11-28-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Summary of Precedent Opinions of the General Counsel

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is publishing a summary of legal interpretations issued by the Department's General Counsel involving veterans' benefits under laws administered by VA. These interpretations are considered precedential by VA and will be followed by VA officials and employees in future claim matters. The summary is published to provide the public, and, in particular, veterans' benefit claimants and their representatives, with notice of VA's interpretations regarding the legal matter at issue.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jane L. Lehman, Chief, Law Library, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-6558.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** VA regulations at 38 CFR 2.6(e)(9) and 14.507 authorize the Department's General Counsel to issue written legal opinions having precedential effect in adjudications and appeals involving veterans' benefits under laws administered by VA. The General Counsel's interpretations on legal matters, contained in such opinions, are conclusive as to all VA officials and employees not only in the matter at issue but also in future adjudications and appeals, in the absence of a change in controlling statute or regulation or a superseding written legal opinion of the General Counsel.

VA publishes summaries of such opinions in order to provide the public with notice of those interpretations of the General Counsel that must be followed in future benefit matters and to assist veterans' benefit claimants and their representatives in the prosecution of benefit claims. The full text of such opinions, with personal identifiers deleted, may be obtained by contacting the VA official named above.