

will provide at least an equivalent level of safety. Under the Safety Plan, train operators must receive formal certification to operate on the TRAX System and must receive an annual recertification, or be re-certified as required in response to rules, violations and long-term absences from the system. See Exhibit G. Train operator training is a four-week course combining classroom and field training. Subjects includes rules, standard operating procedures, emergency operating procedures, light rail vehicle orientation, light rail vehicle troubleshooting, system orientation, and communications. Train operators must pass written and field tests to successfully complete the course. In addition, the TRAX operating rules call for a system of discipline, leading to possible decertification for train operators who violate operating rules.

Interested parties are invited to participate in this proceeding by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with either the request for a waiver of certain regulatory provisions or the request for an exemption of certain statutory provisions. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, he or she should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for his or her request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA 1999-6253) and must be submitted to the DOT Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza level) 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning this proceeding are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at the above facility. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on September 27, 1999.

Michael Logue,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Compliance and Program Implementation.
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA-1999-6070]

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR Part 236 as detailed below.

Docket No. FRA-1999-6070

Applicant: Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Mr. William G. Peterson Director Signal Engineering 4515 Kansas Avenue Kansas City, Kansas 66106.

Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway seeks approval of the proposed annual modification of the signal system for winter operation, on the two main tracks, between milepost 1151.74 and milepost 1152.34, near Marias, Montana, on the Montana Division, Hi Line Subdivision. The proposed changes consist of the following, on an annual basis, during winter operations:

1. Temporarily spike, clamp, and disable switch controls in field for power-operated double crossover switches;
2. Temporarily discontinue and turn to the field, the westbound home signals at Marias; and
3. Temporarily extend the OS out to the existing westbound repeater signals, remove the number boards from the westbound repeater signals, and in effective convert the westbound repeater signals to the new westbound home signals.

The reasons given for the proposed changes are that during winter operations it is impossible to keep switches clear of snow, causing train delays due to switches being out of correspondence, and the potential for unsafe air loss associated with stopping on a 1.66 percent grade can be prevented.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the Protestant in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on September 27, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Docket No. FRA-1999-6071

Applicant: Union Pacific Railroad Company, Mr. Phil Abaray, Chief Engineer—Signals, 1416 Dodge Street, Room 1000, Omaha, Nebraska 68179-1000.

Union Pacific Railroad Company seeks approval of the proposed modification of the signal systems, on

the two main tracks, near Houston, Texas, on the Houston East Belt and Houston West Belt Subdivisions, consisting of the discontinuance and removal of 30 automatic leaving signals at the following locations:

Houston East Belt Subdivision

- milepost 3.4—signals No.'s 109 and 107
 - milepost 8.2—signals No.'s 59 and 61
 - milepost 9.1—signals No.'s 54 and 52
 - milepost 9.4—signals No.'s 53 and 51
 - milepost 10.6—signals No.'s 40 and 38
 - milepost 11.3—signals No.'s 33 and 35
 - milepost 12.1—signals No.'s 32 and 34
 - milepost 12.75—signals No.'s 19 and 17
 - milepost 13.2—signals No.'s 14 and 16
 - milepost 13.3—signals No.'s 11 and 9
 - milepost 14.3—signals No.'s 6 and 4
- Houston West Belt Subdivision*
- milepost 7.6—signals No.'s 225 and 227
 - milepost 8.1—signals No.'s 220 and 218
 - milepost 8.3—signals No.'s 219 and 221
 - milepost 9.6—signals No.'s 206 and 204

The reason given for the proposed changes is that the leaving signals are redundant and that only entering signals are used to control train movements.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the Protester in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on September 27, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-99-6270]

Notice of Public Meeting for Strategies to Address the Potential for Driver Distraction Due to Emerging Vehicle Technologies

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: On October 15, 1999, NHTSA will conduct a public meeting to discuss strategies for realizing the benefits of advanced driver assistance and information technologies without compromising safety. These new technologies, known as telematics, include a range of automotive devices to transmit, receive, or display information. The intent of this meeting is to share viewpoints, information, and findings, if any, relative to the safety impact of telematics devices among the public, industry, government, and safety groups. Topics to be discussed include the need for research to understand the safety implications of telematics, the role of various entities in promoting best practices in the design and use of these devices, and opportunities for proper evaluation of the safety impacts of such systems to ensure the safe design, application, and use of telematics devices.

DATES: Public Meeting: NHTSA will hold the public meeting on October 15, 1999, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Written Comments: The agency has established Docket No. NHTSA-99-6270 as a repository for comment on issues related to the safety of telematics devices. Written comments may be made to this docket at any time.

ADDRESSES: Public Meeting: The public meeting will be held in room 2230, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400

Seventh Street, SW, Washington DC 20590.

Written Comments: If you wish to submit written comments on the issues related to or discussed at this meeting, they should refer to Docket No. NHTSA-99-6270 and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590 (Docket hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. August Burgett, Office of Vehicle Safety Research, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone 202-366-5663, Aburgett@nhtsa.dot.gov) or Dr. Jeffrey Michael, EMS Division, NTS-14, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone 202-366-4299, Jmichael@nhtsa.dot.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The increasing utilization of certain advanced technologies in automobiles brings both the promise of safety enhancement and concerns about safety compromises due to the potential of crash causation. Technologies which transmit, receive, or display information from an automobile have collectively been termed telematics, and include devices such as automatic collision notification systems, navigation systems, and driver warning systems, as well as in-vehicle fax machines, telephones, and other communication equipment.

Many of the functions performed by these devices promise direct safety benefits, for example automatic notification of emergency personnel following a crash or hazard alerts to inform drivers of dangerous traffic and roadway conditions. However, devices which provide drivers with additional information could also distract the driver from the task of operating the vehicle and increase the risk of crashes.

B. Public Meeting

On October 15, 1999, NHTSA will conduct a public meeting, providing a forum for industry, safety, research groups, and the general public to discuss strategies for realizing the safety and other benefits of telematics technologies without compromising safety. The intent of this meeting is to share viewpoints, information, and findings relative to the issue of the safety impact of telematics devices. Topics to be discussed include current research plans among stakeholders, the need for further research to understand the safety implications of telematics, the role of policies to promote best practices in the design and use of these devices,