

Internet at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>. Specifically address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the functions of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. EDT, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Dated: January 7, 2002.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-648 Filed 1-9-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket Number: MARAD-2002-11282]

Requested Administrative Waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Invitation for public comments on a requested administrative waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws for the vessel FELLOWSHIP.

SUMMARY: As authorized by Pub. L. 105-383, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to grant waivers of the U.S.-build requirement of the coastwise laws under certain circumstances. A request for such a waiver has been received by MARAD. The vessel, and a description of the proposed service, is listed below. Interested parties may comment on the effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. If MARAD determines that in accordance with Pub. L. 105-383 and MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388 (65 FR 6905; February 11, 2000) that the issuance of the waiver will have an unduly adverse effect on a U.S.-vessel builder or a business that uses U.S.-flag vessels, a waiver will not be granted.

DATES: Submit comments on or before February 11, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to docket number MARAD-2002-11282. Written comments may be submitted by hand or by mail to the Docket Clerk,

U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, Department of Transportation, 400 7th St., SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You may also send comments electronically via the Internet at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit/>. All comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection and copying at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. An electronic version of this document and all documents entered into this docket is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathleen Dunn, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, MAR-832 Room 7201, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-2307.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Title V of Pub. L. 105-383 provides authority to the Secretary of Transportation to administratively waive the U.S.-build requirements of the Jones Act, and other statutes, for small commercial passenger vessels (no more than 12 passengers). This authority has been delegated to the Maritime Administration per 49 CFR 1.66, Delegations to the Maritime Administrator, as amended. By this notice, MARAD is publishing information on a vessel for which a request for a U.S.-build waiver has been received, and for which MARAD requests comments from interested parties. Comments should refer to the docket number of this notice and the vessel name in order for MARAD to properly consider the comments. Comments should also state the commenter's interest in the waiver application, and address the waiver criteria given in § 388.4 of MARAD'S regulations at 46 CFR part 388.

Vessel Proposed for Waiver of the U.S.-Build Requirement

(1) Name of vessel and owner for which waiver is requested. Name of vessel: FELLOWSHIP. Owner: Nels Erik & Tina Marie Jensen.

(2) Size, capacity and tonnage of vessel. According to the applicant: "75' in length. Tonnage per document is 113 gross and 90 net."

(3) Intended use for vessel, including geographic region of intended operation and trade. According to the applicant: "Naturalist guided, day only, eco-excursion for groups of 12 passengers to San Juan Islands National Wildlife Reserve, San Juan Islands, Washington State."

(4) Date and Place of construction and (if applicable) rebuilding. *Date of construction:* Unknown. *Place of construction:* Unknown.

(5) A statement on the impact this waiver will have on other commercial passenger vessel operators. According to the applicant: "I do not feel we would impact any existing commercial sightseeing, whale watching, or tourist operator whatsoever. These are larger commercial ventures that appeal to an entirely different clientele."

(6) A statement on the impact this waiver will have on U.S. shipyards. According to the applicant: "* * * I used Seattle and Northwest shipyards to restore this vessel and I plan to continue to use the same for yearly haulouts and repairs. * * * I can only see a benefit and therefore a positive impact on our local shipyards and respective local economy * * *"

Dated: January 7, 2002.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 2001-10312; Notice 2]

Michelin North America, Inc.; Grant of Application for Decision That Noncompliance Is Inconsequential to Motor Vehicle Safety

Michelin North America, Inc., (Michelin), determined that approximately 173,800 205/55R16 Michelin Energy MXV4+ tires do not meet the labeling requirements mandated by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 109, "New Pneumatic Tires." FMVSS No. 109 requires that each tire shall have permanently molded into or onto both sidewalls the generic name of each cord material used in the plies of the tire (S4.3 (d)).

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h), Michelin has petitioned for a determination that this noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports."

Notice of receipt of the application was published, with a 30-day comment period, on August 9, 2001, in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 41931). NHTSA received no comments on this application. During the period of the 4th week of 2000 through the 9th week of 2001, the subject tires were produced and cured with the erroneous marking. Instead of the required marking of:

Tread Plies — 2 Polyester + 2 Steel + 1 Polyamide, Sidewall Plies — 2 polyester, the tires were marked: Tread Plies — 2 Rayon + 2 Steel + 1 Polyamide, Sidewall Plies — 2 Rayon. Of the total, approximately 162,500 tires may have been delivered to customers. The remaining tires have been identified in Michelin's warehouse.

Michelin stated that these tires meet or exceed all FMVSS No. 109 performance requirements and, therefore, this noncompliance is inconsequential as it relates to motor vehicle safety.

The Transportation Recall, Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act of November 2000 required, among other things, that the agency initiate rulemaking to improve tire label information. In response to Section 11 of the TREAD Act, the agency published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in the **Federal Register** on December 1, 2000 (65 FR 75222). The agency received more than 20 comments addressing the ANPRM, which sought comments on the tire labeling information required by 49 CFR 571.109 and 571.119, part 567, part 574, and part 575. Most of the comments were from motor vehicle and tire manufacturers, although several private citizens and consumer interest organizations responded to the ANPRM. With regard to the tire construction (number of plies and type of ply cord material in the tread and sidewall) labeling requirements of FMVSS 109, paragraphs S4.3 (d) and (e), most comments indicated that the information was of little or no safety value to consumers. However, the tire construction information is valuable to the tire re-treading, repair, and recycling industries, according to several trade groups representing tire manufacturing. The International Tire and Rubber Association, Inc., (ITRA) indicated that the tire construction information is used by tire technicians to determine the steel content of a tire so that proper retread, repair, and recycling procedures can be selected.

In addition to the written comments solicited by the ANPRM, the agency conducted a series of focus groups, as required by the TREAD Act, to examine consumer perception and understanding of tire labeling. Few of the focus group participants had knowledge of tire label information beyond the tire brand name, tire size, and tire pressure.

Based on the information obtained from comments to the ANPRM and the consumer focus groups, we believe that it is likely that few consumers are influenced by the tire construction

information (i.e., the number of plies and cord material in the sidewall and tread plies) provided on the tire label when deciding to buy a motor vehicle or tire. However, the tire repair, retread, and recycling industries use the tire construction information.

The agency believes that the true measure of inconsequentiality to motor vehicle safety in this case is the effect of the noncompliance on the operational safety of vehicles on which these tires are mounted. The safety of people working in the tire retread, repair, and recycling industries must also be considered. Although tire construction affects the strength and durability, neither the agency nor the tire industry provides information relating tire strength and durability to the number of plies and types of ply cord material in the tread and sidewall. Therefore, tire dealers and customers should consider the tire construction information along with other information such as the load capacity, maximum inflation pressure, and tread wear, temperature, and traction ratings, to assess performance capabilities of various tires. In the agency's judgment, specifying rayon instead of polyester for tire construction will have an inconsequential effect on motor vehicle safety because most consumers do not base tire purchases or vehicle operation parameters on tire construction information. The agency also believes the noncompliance will have no measurable effect on the safety of the tire retread, repair, and recycling industries. The use of steel cord construction in the sidewall and tread is the primary safety concern of these industries, according to ITRA. In this case, the fact that steel is used in the tread construction of the tires appears on the sidewalls. In consideration of the foregoing, NHTSA has decided that the applicant has met the burden of persuasion and that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety. Accordingly, Michelin's application is granted and the applicant is exempted from providing the notification of the noncompliance that would be required by 49 U.S.C. 30118, and from remedying the noncompliance, as would be required by 49 U.S.C. 30120.

(49 U.S.C. 30118, 301120; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

Issued on: January 4, 2002.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 02-656 Filed 1-9-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34142]

Bethlehem Steel Corporation— Corporate Family Transaction Exemption

Bethlehem Steel Corporation (BSC), a noncarrier holding company, has filed a verified notice of exemption. As part of an overall corporate restructuring, BSC is forming six new limited liability company subsidiaries (LLCs) to merge with and succeed to the rights of six of BSC's existing subsidiary Class III rail carriers. BSC will continue to control the LLCs.¹

The transaction was to be consummated as of January 1, 2002. The earliest the transaction could have been consummated was December 26, 2001, the effective date of the exemption (7 days after the notice of exemption was filed.) The corporate restructuring will provide tax benefits to BSC, eliminate the filing of certain tax returns, and provide other administrative benefits.

BSC's control of the LLCs and the conversion of the six existing BSC rail carriers to LLCs through mergers are transactions within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). BSC states that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers outside the corporate family.

¹ The six BSC subsidiary railroads are as follows: Brandywine Valley Railroad Company, operating in the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware; Upper Merion and Plymouth Railroad Company, operating in the State of Pennsylvania; Conemaugh & Black Lick Railroad Company, operating in the State of Pennsylvania; Keystone Railroad, Inc., operating in the State of Pennsylvania; Steelton & Highspire Railroad Company, operating in the State of Pennsylvania; and Patapsco & Back Rivers Railroad Company, operating in the State of Maryland. The instant corporate family transaction is related to six concurrently filed verified notices of exemption: STB Finance Docket No. 34154, *Brandywine Valley Railroad Company LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Brandywine Valley Railroad Company*; STB Finance Docket No. 34155, *Upper Merion and Plymouth Railroad Company LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Upper Merion and Plymouth Railroad Company*; STB Finance Docket No. 34156, *Conemaugh & Black Lick Railroad Company LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Conemaugh & Black Lick Railroad Company*; STB Finance Docket No. 34157, *Keystone Railroad LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Keystone Railroad, Inc.*; STB Finance Docket No. 34158, *Steelton & Highspire Railroad Company LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Steelton & Highspire Railroad Company*; and STB Finance Docket No. 34159, *Patapsco & Back Rivers Railroad Company LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Patapsco & Back Rivers Railroad Company*.