

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 35155]

FPN—USA, Inc.—Operation
Exemption—Tijuana-Tecate Shortline

FPN—USA, Inc. (FPN), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to operate an approximately 44.6-mile line of railroad known as the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline, currently owned by the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway Company (SD&AE).¹ The rail line, almost all of which is in Mexico, extends between approximately milepost 15.0 at San Ysidro, CA, and milepost 59.6 at Division, CA, and runs through Baja California, Mexico.² In addition, FPN proposes to acquire, as incidental trackage rights, trackage rights over the line being operated by Carrizo Gorge Railway, Inc. (CZRY) between milepost 59.6 at Division and milepost 65.8 at Campo, CA.³ FPN seeks these incidental trackage rights to reach a suitable interchange point at Campo because there is no place to interchange at Division.

FPN advises that the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline constitutes a portion of a longer rail line owned by SD&AE, a former Southern Pacific Transportation Company subsidiary.⁴ Citing *San Diego*, FPN states that, until July 1, 2001, pursuant to an operation and management agreement with SD&AE, the San Diego & Imperial Valley Railroad Company (SDIV) provided freight service over a rail line that extends a distance of approximately 130 miles between San Diego, CA, and a point near Plaster City, CA (the San Diego-Plaster City line), and includes

the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline.⁵ See *San Diego & Imperial Valley R. Co., Inc.—Exemption*, 1 I.C.C.2d 941 (1985). On July 1, 2001, SDIV entered into a sublease with CZRY, which then operated over the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline. See *supra* note 3. FPN further states that CZRY has recently been performing service outside the Tijuana region only sporadically. As a result, according to FPN, Baja California is in the process of canceling CZRY's contract and has put the operation of the line out for bid.

FPN indicates that Union Pacific Railroad Company has indicated its willingness to work with FPN, should Baja California select FPN to operate the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline, for the purpose of interchanging traffic that originated or will terminate in Mexico. By letter filed on July 21, 2008, SDIV states that it is unaware of any changes to CZRY's operation over the Tijuana-Tecate Shortline or of FPN's intent to operate over it, that SDIV has had no communications with FPN regarding FPN's desire to operate over the line, and that there have been no discussions with FPN regarding coordination of operations.⁶

The transaction is scheduled to be consummated on or after August 10, 2008 (the effective date of the exemption).

FPN certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction would not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier and further certifies that its projected annual revenues will not exceed \$5 million.

Pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, Public Law No. 110-161, § 193, 121 Stat. 1844 (2007), nothing in this decision authorizes the following activities at any solid waste rail transfer facility: Collecting, storing or transferring solid waste outside of its original shipping container; or separating or processing solid waste (including baling, crushing, compacting and shredding). The term "solid waste" is defined in section 1004 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, 42 U.S.C. 6903.

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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than August 1, 2008 (at least 7 days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 35155, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on John D. Hefner, Esq., John D. Hefner, PLLC, 1750 K Street, NW., Suite 350, Washington, DC 20006.

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

Decided: July 21, 2008.

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

Anne K. Quinlan,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. E8-17103 Filed 7-24-08; 8:45 am]

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U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND
SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

Notice of Open Public Hearing

AGENCY: U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

ACTION: Notice of open public hearing—August 13, 2008, Washington, DC.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Name: Larry Wortzel, Chairman of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

The Commission is mandated by Congress to investigate, assess, evaluate and report to Congress annually on "the national security implications and impact of the bilateral trade and economic relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China."

Pursuant to this mandate, the Commission will hold a public hearing in Washington, DC on August 13, 2008 to address "China's Energy Policies and Their Environmental Impacts."

Background

This event is the ninth in a series of public hearings the Commission will hold during its 2008 report cycle to collect input from leading academic, industry, and government experts on the impact of the economic and national security implications of the U.S.

¹ FPN concurrently filed a public and a confidential version of the notice. The confidential version was filed under seal along with a motion for protective order. The motion for protective order is being addressed in a separate decision.

² FPN will shortly submit a proposal to the Mexican State of Baja California to operate the line. FPN will commence operations if this proposal is accepted and an operating agreement is executed.

³ See *Carrizo Gorge Railway, Inc.—Operation Exemption—Line of San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway Company and San Diego & Imperial Valley Railroad Company, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 34078 (STB served Aug. 16, 2001). On July 18, 2008, FPN stated that it intends to enter into a trackage rights agreement with CZRY.

⁴ SD&AE is owned by the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board, a noncarrier public agency which operates light rail passenger transit service over a portion of the San Diego-Plaster City line between San Diego, CA, and the International Border between the United States and Mexico at San Ysidro, CA/Tijuana, MX. See *San Diego & Imperial Valley R. Co., Inc.—Exemption From 49 U.S.C. 10901 and 11301*, Finance Docket No. 30457 (ICC served Aug. 17, 1984) (*San Diego*).

⁵ The Board has entry jurisdiction over railroads and rail lines that provide service between one point in the United States and another point in the United States through a foreign country. See *id.*, see also *Trans-Ontario Ry. Co.—Exemption—49 U.S.C. 10901*, Finance Docket No. 30566 (ICC served Feb. 5, 1985).

⁶ If the exemption becomes effective, the authority obtained by FPN through the exemption is permissive and does not bestow on FPN any legal rights it would need to obtain by contract from SD&AE, SDIV, CZRY, or any other party.

bilateral trade and economic relationship with China. The August 13 hearing will examine China's energy policymaking structure and reforms, China's environmental policy and activities to address the environmental impacts of its energy use, the effects of China's greenhouse gas emissions and its approach to global climate change, and U.S.-China energy technology cooperation in civil nuclear energy.

The August 13 hearing will address "China's Energy Policies and Their Environmental Impacts" and will be Co-chaired by Commissioners William A. Reinsch and Daniel M. Slane.

Information on hearings, as well as transcripts of past Commission hearings, can be obtained from the USCC Web Site <http://www.uscc.gov>.

Copies of the hearing agenda will be made available on the Commission's Web Site <http://www.uscc.gov> as soon as available. Any interested party may file a written statement by August 13, 2008, by mailing to the contact below. On August 13, the hearing will be held in two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There will be a question and answer period between the Commissioners and the witnesses.

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, August 13, 2008, 9:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. A detailed agenda for the hearing will be posted to the Commission's Web Site at <http://www.uscc.gov> in the near future.

ADDRESSES: The hearing will be held on Capitol Hill in Room 562 Dirksen Senate Office Building located at First Street and Constitution Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20510. Public seating is limited to about 50 people on a first come, first served basis. Advance reservations are not required.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Any member of the public wishing further information concerning the hearing should contact Kathy Michels, Associate Director for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 444 North Capitol Street, NW., Suite 602, Washington, DC 20001; phone: 202-624-1409, or via e-mail at kmichels@uscc.gov.

Authority: Congress created the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in 2000 in the National Defense Authorization Act (Pub. L. 106-398), as amended by Division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (Public Law 108-7), as amended by Public Law 109-108 (November 22, 2005).

Dated: July 21, 2008.

Kathleen J. Michels,

Associate Director, U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

[FR Doc. E8-17010 Filed 7-24-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 1137-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Disciplinary Appeals Board Panel

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice with request for comments.

SUMMARY: Section 203 of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Act of 1991 (Pub. L. 102-40), dated May 7, 1991, revised the disciplinary grievance and appeal procedures for employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1). It also required the periodic designation of employees of the Department who are qualified to serve on Disciplinary Appeals Boards.

These employees constitute the Disciplinary Appeals Board panel from which Board members in a case are appointed. This notice announces that the roster of employees on the panel is available for review and comment. Employees, employee organizations, and other interested parties shall be provided, without charge, a list of the names of employees on the panel upon request and may submit comments concerning the suitability for service on the panel of any employee whose name is on the list.

DATES: Names that appear on the panel may be selected to serve on a Board or as a grievance examiner after August 25, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Requests for the list of names of employees on the panel and written comments may be directed to: Secretary of Veterans Affairs (051), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Requests and comments may also be faxed to (202) 273-9776.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Latoya Smith, Employee Relations Specialist (051), Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Ms. Smith may be reached at (202) 461-7975.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public Law 102-40 requires that the availability of the roster be posted in the **Federal Register** periodically, and not less than annually.

Dated: July 21, 2008.

Gordon H. Mansfield,

Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. E8-17124 Filed 7-24-08; 8:45 am]

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