

30856
SEC

SERVICE DATE - FEBRUARY 17, 2000

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

STB Ex Parte No. 582

DECISION

PUBLIC VIEWS ON MAJOR RAIL CONSOLIDATIONS

Decided: February 17, 2000

This Board has scheduled a public hearing starting on Tuesday, March 7, and continuing on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, March 8, 9, and 10, 2000, respectively, at 10:00 a.m., in the Surface Transportation Board Hearing Room (Suite 760) at 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The Board will provide an overflow room (the Brick Room) on the first floor of the building with a closed-circuit telecast of the entire proceeding. The Board requests that all participants in the hearing submit the name of their speaker for the hearing to the Office of the Secretary by March 3, 2000.

Access and Security

Given the number of persons likely to attend the hearing, the Board requests that all persons attending the hearing use the building's entrance located on 20th Street between K and L Streets. For security reasons, upon entering the 20th Street entrance, all persons should be prepared to produce photo identification (such as a driver's license), pass through a metal detector, and submit to an inspection of all briefcases, handbags and any other bags. The hearing likely will last all day each day, and the hearing room and the Brick Room will be secured during the lunch recess, if a lunch break is scheduled.

To effectively conduct the proceeding, the Board must control access to the hearing room. Participants and one associate will be issued badges for admission to the hearing room for the day of their presentation. Participants may pick up badges in advance from the Office of the Secretary, Information Officer, Room 100, beginning March 6, 2000, or may pick them up at the Board's 20th Street entrance each day of the hearing for that day. The badges for the balance of the seating in the hearing room (if any) and the seating in the Brick Room will be issued to the public each day of the hearing, for that day only, on a "first come, first served" basis. Public admission badges will be available at the Board's 20th Street entrance beginning at 9:00 a.m. on each day of the hearing. The badges will be disbursed one per person. Upon clearing security at the 20th Street entrance, those individuals holding badges for the hearing room will be escorted to the seventh floor. All others will be escorted to the Brick Room on the first floor. "Line sitters" are permitted, but will not be issued badges.

Board staff will begin admitting people to the hearing room and the Brick Room at 9:00 a.m. on each day of the hearing. Badge holders leaving the premises, and not intending to return,

should relinquish their badge to Board staff. The Board's Hearing Room and Brick Room do comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, and persons needing such accommodation should contact the Office of the Secretary by close of business, March 6, 2000.

Written Submissions

By previous decision in this matter served January 24, 2000, the Board ordered each speaker at the hearing to file with the Board the text of his or her anticipated written statement, and/or a summary thereof. A participant's statement will be released to the public and posted on the Board's website (www.dot.stb.gov) at 10:30 a.m. on the day of the hearing at which that participant is speaking, after processing by Board staff. The filings also will be available for public inspection in the Board's Docket Room at that time. Speakers are free to bring extra copies of their statements to the hearing for distribution by Board staff. The Board will not duplicate the speakers' statements.

Because the Board desires to make available to the public all participants' comments, due February 29, 2000, by publishing both an image and a text file of them on the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov under the "Filings" link, participants are provided the following filing instructions.

Document Scanning. To ensure the highest quality document image is captured during the scanning process, participants shall submit comments in accordance with existing rules, which require that all filings be clear and legible; on opaque, unglazed, durable paper not exceeding 8.5 X 11 inches; and able to be reproduced by photography. For this proceeding, we also will require that only white paper be used; that printing appear on only one side of a page; that parties not employ color printing, but use only black or dark blue ink; and that all pages of filings, including cover letters and any attachments, be paginated continuously. The original document should be submitted unbound without tabs to reduce possible damage to the document during removal of fasteners and to facilitate the use of a high-speed mechanism for automated scanning. Multi-page documents may be clipped with a removable clip or other similar device. All filings, including oversize or other non-scannable items, will be available at the Board's Docket Room.

Electronic Format. To permit interested persons to text search filings from the website the parties shall submit their pleadings, including any graphics, on a 3.5-inch diskette formatted for WordPerfect 7.0 (or in a format readily convertible into WordPerfect 7.0). All textual material, including cover letters, certificates of service, appendices and exhibits, shall be included in a single file on the diskette. The diskettes shall be clearly labeled with the filer's name, the docket number of this hearing (STB Ex Parte No. 582) and the name of the electronic format used on the diskette for files other than those formatted in WordPerfect 7.0. The electronic submission requirements set forth in this decision supersede, for the purposes of this hearing, the otherwise applicable electronic submissions requirements set forth in the Board's regulations. See 49 CFR 1104.3(a), as amended in Expedited Procedures for Processing Rail Rate Reasonableness, Exemption and Revocation Proceedings, STB Ex Parte No. 527, 61 FR 52710, 711 (Oct. 8, 1996), 61 FR 58490, 58491 (Nov. 15, 1996).

Other Hearing Matters

Participants planning to use visual aids, such as maps, are advised to inform the Office of the Secretary at (202) 565-1674, no later than close of business on Wednesday, March 1, 2000.

Participants are limited to projector-adaptable visual displays or handouts. The Board will provide space for any handouts participants wish to bring to the hearing for dissemination to the public. Board staff will be available in the Board's hearing room, Suite 760, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Friday, March 3, 2000, to demonstrate the Board's projection system.

The hearing will be videotaped by Blackberry Productions, a contractor retained by the Board. The contractor will sell copies of the videotape of the hearing, if there is a public demand. Blackberry Productions will provide order forms at the hearing for those seeking to order videotapes of the hearing. For those unable to attend the hearing, tapes may be ordered by contacting Blackberry Productions at 202/251-0934.

Comments or questions concerning this decision should be directed to Bettye Uzzle, the Information Officer for the Office of the Secretary at 202/565-1674.

It is ordered:

1. Admittance to the Surface Transportation Board hearing on March 7, 8, 9, and 10, 2000, will be upon the conditions set forth above.
2. This decision is effective on the date of service.

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams, Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary