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SEC

SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE MARCH 20, 1998

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Ex Parte No. 575

REVIEW OF RAIL ACCESS AND COMPETITION ISSUES

Decided: March 20, 1998

A two-day public hearing to review rail access and competitive issues has been scheduled beginning Thursday, April 2, 1998, 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 hearing.

Given the large number of persons likely to attend the hearing, the Board requests that all persons attending the hearing use the building's entrances located on 20th Street between K and L Streets. Witnesses and their associate should enter through the doors marked "Speakers Only". All others should use the entrance marked "Public". For security reasons, upon entering the 20th Street entrances, 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 is expected to last all day each day, and the hearing room and the overflow room will be secured during the lunch recess.

To effectively conduct this hearing, the Board must limit access to the hearing room and the overflow room. Witnesses and one associate each will be permitted into the hearing room on the day of their presentation, and Board staff will issue them badges. The balance of the hearing room will be available for public seating on a first-come, first-served basis each day of the hearing. Upon clearing security at the 20th Street entrance, all persons will be escorted to the seventh floor hearing room. Only holders of hearing room or media badges will be admitted to the seventh floor hearing room. The media should contact the Board's Office of Congressional and Public Services for admission badges.

The public will be admitted to the hearing and overflow rooms. The hearing room will have approximately 70 public seats, and the overflow room seats 110. The public badges for the hearing room and the overflow room will be issued by Board staff at the 20th Street entrance on a first-come, first-served basis, each day. "Line sitters" are permitted, but will not be issued badges.

Board staff will begin admitting people to the hearing room and overflow rooms at 8:00 a.m. All participants are requested to arrive early enough to be admitted to the hearing room by 9:45 a.m. Badge holders leaving the premises, and not intending to return, should relinquish their badge to

Board staff. The Board's Hearing Room does comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, and persons needing such accommodation should contact the Office of the Secretary by noon, Monday, March 30, 1998.

The witnesses have been requested to submit written comments (originals plus 10 copies) by March 26, 1998. In addition to the original and 10 copies, the witnesses are requested to submit the written comments, including any graphics, on a 3.5-inch diskette formatted for WordPerfect 7.0 (or formatted so that it can be converted into WordPerfect 7.0) and clearly labeled with the filer's name and this docket number, STB Ex Parte No. 575. Any prepared comments submitted on disk by the witnesses for the hearing will be posted on the Board's website (www.stb.dot.gov) on the day the witness appears. The written copies of the comments will be available from the Board's contractor, D.C. News and Data, Inc., located in Room 210 in the Board's building, as soon after the conclusion of the hearing as possible. D.C. News can be reached at (202)289-4357. The comments will also be available for viewing and self copying in the Board's Microfilm Unit, Room 755, after 10:30 a.m. on the day the witness appears. The hearing will be video-taped, and the Board will make arrangements to have the tapes duplicated, at cost, if there is a public demand for copies of the tapes.

Speakers planning to use visual aids, such as maps, are advised to inform the Office of the Secretary at (202)565-1650, no later than close of business on Friday, March 27, 1998. Participants are limited to projector-adaptable visual displays or handouts. The Board will provide space for handouts speakers wish to bring to the hearing for dissemination to the public. The Board staff will be available in the Board's Hearing Room (Suite 760), from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 30, 1998, to demonstrate the Board's projection system.

Comments or questions concerning this decision should be directed to Bettye Uzzle, the Information Officer for the Office of the Secretary at (202)565-1650.

It is ordered:

1. Admittance to the Surface Transportation Board hearing beginning April 2, 1998, will be based 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