



# SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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## STB INSTITUTES PROCEEDING, STREAMLINES PERMITTING FOR NEW RAIL LINE IN NEVADA

The Surface Transportation Board today instituted a proceeding to consider a proposal by Nevada Gold Rail LLC (NG Rail), an affiliate of Nevada Gold Mines LLC (NGM), to construct approximately 55.7 miles of rail line in Eureka and Lander Counties, Nevada. In today's decision, the Board waives certain requirements based on recent changes to the interpretation and application of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), thereby streamlining the permitting process while ensuring opportunities for robust public involvement.

NG Rail states that the line would connect NGM's mining facilities to an existing Union Pacific Railroad mainline to allow gold ore transportation by rail instead of truck, which would provide a safer, more cost-effective, and environmentally friendly means of transporting gold ore.

NEPA requires that the Board examine the potential environmental impacts of "major federal actions" that it undertakes. In today's decision, the Board determines that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is appropriate. The EIS process here will include meaningful public involvement early in the environmental review and will ensure that the Board considers the potential environmental effects of the line as required under NEPA. The agency has requested preliminary comments from appropriate federal, state, Tribal, and local agencies, and it will host public meetings and provide opportunities for substantive public comment, along with launching a public project webpage that will be updated throughout the EIS process.

Congress, Presidential Executive Orders, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Supreme Court have changed NEPA's statutory and regulatory framework significantly since the Board last revised its environmental regulations in 1991. Based on these recent changes, and to promote a more efficient and streamlined process, the EIS process laid out in today's decision waives certain requirements in 49 C.F.R. 1105.10(a)(2)-(4) for publication of a Final Scope of Study and a Draft EIS in this proceeding. This process is consistent with the Board's proposed changes to its environmental regulations in Permitting Reform—Environmental Review Process, EP 779 (STB served Mar. 25, 2026).

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) will prepare and publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an EIS, which will include detailed information about the planned scope of analysis for the EIS. The NOI will be more fulsome than under prior Board EIS process and will serve as an opportunity for interested members of the public to substantively engage earlier in the environmental review process. The NOI will also include a request for public comments on

potential environmental effects and on relevant information, studies, or analyses with respect to the line. Following the NOI and Scoping, OEA will then prepare and publish an EIS that will analyze in detail the potential environmental impacts of the line, respond to public comments on the NOI, and make any appropriate recommendations for environmental mitigation. OEA will also evaluate the potential impacts of the line on historic properties during the EIS process.

Public participation is an integral part of the Board's environmental review process, and the EIS process in this proceeding is intended to provide ample opportunities for timely public participation. In making its final decision on whether the line should be authorized, and if so, what environmental mitigation conditions to impose, the Board will consider the entire record, including the record on the transportation merits, the NOI, the EIS, and all public and agency comments received.

Today's decision in Nevada Gold Rail LLC—Construction Exemption—in Eureka and Lander Counties, Nevada, Docket No. FD 36889, may be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

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