

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD TO HOLD HEARING ON PROPOSED MEDIATION & ARBITRATION RULES

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that it will hold an August 2, 2012 public hearing to explore issues raised by the Board's proposed regulations to increase the use of mediation and arbitration in disputes before the Board.

While the Board has existing procedures in place for both mediation and arbitration, the agency proposed last March the refinement and expansion of those rules to promote greater use of alternative dispute resolution procedures. The proposed rules would require parties to mediate certain matters, and would simplify current rules for voluntary mediation. The Board also proposes a new program in which shippers and carriers could agree to arbitrate certain routine disputes that come before the Board. Class I and Class II rail carriers would be deemed to agree voluntarily to participate in the Board's proposed arbitration program unless they "opt out."

The hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m., in the Board's Hearing Room at the agency's headquarters located at 395 E Street, SW in Washington, D.C. Parties wishing to participate must file a notice of intent to participate (identifying the party, proposed speaker, and speaking time requested) no later than July 19, 2012.

The Board's notice announcing the hearing was issued to the public today in the proceeding entitled [Assessment of Mediation and Arbitration Procedures, EP 699](#). The notice will be published in the [Federal Register](#) and is available for viewing and downloading on the agency's website, www.stb.dot.gov. Live video of the hearing will be available via the agency's website.

###