

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD ISSUES "WICHITA PRELIMINARY MITIGATION PLAN," SCHEDULES SEPT. 30 PUBLIC MEETING IN CONNECTION WITH UP-SP MERGER

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Monday, September 15, 1997 i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z i:z
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IN CONNECTION WITH UP-SP MERGER**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) announced today that its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has issued its Union Pacific-Southern Pacific Railroad Merger: Wichita Mitigation Study Preliminary Mitigation Plan (PMP) for public review and comment for a 30-day period ending **October 15, 1997**. The PMP describes preliminary, additional environmental mitigation for Wichita and Sedgwick County, Kansas, to address further potential environmental impacts unique to that city and county from increased rail traffic on the "Union Pacific" Union Pacific Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. (UP) railroad right-of-way (formerly owned by "Southern Pacific" Southern Pacific Rail Corporation, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, SPCSL Corp., and The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company. [SP]) traversing Wichita and Sedgwick County as a result of the UP-SP merger approved by the Board in August 1996 In Decision No. 44 in the proceeding entitled *Union Pacific Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Missouri Pacific Railroad Company--Control and Merger--Southern Pacific Transportation Company, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, SPCSL Corp., and The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company*, Finance Docket No. 32760..

The Board also announced that the SEA will conduct a public meeting on **Tuesday, September 30, 1997**, in Wichita to provide the public the opportunity to receive additional information on the PMP and to comment on it. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. local time in the Mary Jane Teall Theater at the Century II Convention Center, in Wichita. During this meeting, the SEA staff will make brief presentations and answer questions from the public. The meeting will be immediately preceded by an informal "open house" to be held from 6:00-7:00 p.m. during which members of the public may view maps and graphical illustrations of the geographical area under study and discuss the preliminary options recommended by the SEA.

As part of its approval of the UP-SP merger, the Board directed the SEA to conduct an environmental mitigation study to develop additional, tailored environmental measures--beyond those already imposed on UP-SP in Decision No. 44--to address

local conditions unique to Wichita and Sedgwick County relative to the potential environmental impacts of increased merger-related train traffic. The preliminary results of this study and the SEA's preliminary recommendations for additional environmental mitigation measures are described in the PMP, which will be subject to a 30-day review and comment period concluding October 15, 1997.

The SEA will consider all public comments and issue a Final Mitigation Plan (FMP) for public review and comment. After full consideration of the public comments on the PMP and FMP, the SEA will make its final recommendations to the Board. Any specific mitigation adopted by the Board after its review of the SEA's recommendations will be in addition to those mitigation measures already imposed on the merger.

The SEA welcomes public input on possible mitigation options to address further the potential environmental impacts associated with increased rail traffic resulting from the merger. In addition to distributing copies of the PMP to interested parties for review, the SEA will distribute copies to the Wichita and Sedgwick County Library to facilitate public review and comment.

Public comments must be submitted in writing (an original and 10 copies) **no later than October 15, 1997**, to:

Attention: Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis
Environmental Filing--Wichita
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Finance Docket No. 32760
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW, Room 700
Washington, DC 20423-0001

For further information concerning the PMP or the public meeting, telephone Michael Dalton, Wichita Mitigation Study Director, at **(202) 565-1530**. The TDD number for the hearing impaired is **(202) 565-1695**.

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