

SUMMARY: Notre Capital Ventures II, LLC, and Coach USA, Inc., both noncarriers, seek an exemption, under 49 U.S.C. 13541, from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 14303(a)(4), to acquire control of 10 motor common carriers of passengers. Petitioners request expedition, asking that the exemption become effective no later than May 3, 1996.

DATES: Comments must be filed by April 11, 1996. Petitioners may file a reply by April 16, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of comments referring to STB Finance Docket No. 32876 (Sub-No. 1) to: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20423. In addition, send one copy of comments to petitioners' representatives: Betty Jo Christian and David H. Coburn, Steptoe & Johnson LLP, 1330 Connecticut Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20036.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beryl Gordon, (202) 927-5610. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Petitioners, Notre Capital Ventures II, LLC, and Coach USA, Inc., seek an exemption to acquire, through stock purchase, control over 10 motor carriers of passengers: Arrow Stage Lines, Inc.; Cape Transit Corp.; Community Coach, Inc. (Coach); Community Transit Lines, Inc. (Community Transit); Grosvenor Bus Lines, Inc.; H.A.M.L. Corp.; Leisure Time Tours; Suburban Management Corp. (Management); Suburban Trails, Inc. (Trails); and Suburban Transit Corp (Suburban Transit).

Petitioners also request that the exemption extend to the possible common control of Orange, Newark, Elizabeth Bus, Inc. (ONE Bus). ONE Bus is not part of the proposed transaction but is owned in part by persons who now control Coach and Community Transit, and who will own a small percentage of the new, consolidated entity after the transaction is consummated.

Petitioners request that this exemption become effective no later than May 3, 1996, to allow them to synchronize the exemption with a Securities and Exchange Commission registration statement that is intended to authorize an initial public offering (IPO) of \$45 million in stock to be issued in connection with the proposed transaction and future transactions of this nature. Petitioners state that a delay could increase their costs, make it impossible to complete the IPO as projected, and otherwise jeopardize their entire plan.

Petitioners state that the 10 carriers they seek to control are relatively small and operate in diverse markets across the country. The 10 carriers generally have no connection or control relationship with one another, except that Coach and Community Transit are under common control, and H.A.M.L., Management, Trails, and Suburban Transit are under common control. Petitioners state that the only significant competition among the 10 carriers is in the limited area of charter and special operations.

Aside from charter and special operations, petitioners state that the 10 carriers operate regionally with a relatively small market share. While acknowledging that there are some overlapping routes, petitioners note that the 10 carriers do not compete with each other to any significant degree. Although several of them operate commuter bus services between New York City and points in New Jersey, their routes (with the exception of those operated by carriers already under common control) extend in different directions and serve different termini.

Petitioners assert that, in each of their respective markets, the 10 carriers confront significant competitive pressure from other bus lines and other transportation modes, including commercial airlines, Amtrak, commuter rail services, and the private automobile. Further, petitioners state that the 10 bus companies, whether considered as individual entities or as consolidated into what would be the nation's second largest group of passenger carriers, cannot compare, much less compete on any substantial basis, with Greyhound Lines, Inc., the only bus company providing nationwide, regular-route bus service.

Following the acquisition of control, the 10 carriers allegedly will continue to operate in their respective markets, each in its own name and in the same basic manner as before. Petitioners claim that the 10 carriers will benefit from centralized management, coordination of functions, financial support, and economies of scale and that improved services at lower costs will result.

Petitioners assert that prior review and approval of the transaction under 49 U.S.C. 14303 are not necessary to carry out the transportation policy of 49 U.S.C. 13101, that regulation is not needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power, that the transaction is of limited scope, and that exempting the transaction from regulation is in the public interest.

Additional information may be obtained from petitioners' representatives.

Decided: March 21, 1996.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Simmons, and Commissioner Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-7423 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

[Docket No. AB-453 (Sub-No. 1X)]¹

**Georgia & Florida Railroad Co., Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in Mitchell
and Colquitt Counties, GA**

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of exemption.

SUMMARY: The Board, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10505, exempts Georgia & Florida Railroad Co., Inc. from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903-04 to abandon service over 5.45 miles of rail line in Mitchell and Colquitt Counties, GA, subject to standard labor protective conditions. Specifically, the line runs 1.6 miles between mileposts 93.0 and 94.6 near Camilla, in Mitchell County, GA, and 3.85 miles between mileposts 23.25 and 27.1 near Moultrie, in Colquitt County, GA.

DATES: Provided no formal expression of intent to file a financial assistance offer has been received, this exemption will be effective on April 26, 1996. Formal expressions of intent to file financial assistance offers² under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2), requests for a notice of interim trail use/rail banking and petitions to stay must be filed by April 8, 1996. Requests for a public use condition and petitions to reopen must be filed by April 16, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Send pleadings referring to Docket No. AB-453 (Sub-No. 1X) to: (1) Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20423; and (2) Petitioner's representative: Jo A.

¹ The ICC Termination Act of 1995, Pub. L. No. 104-88, 109 Stat. 803 (the Act), which was enacted on December 29, 1995, and took effect on January 1, 1996, abolished the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and transferred certain functions and proceedings to the Surface Transportation Board (Board). Section 204(b)(1) of the Act provides, in general, that proceedings pending before the ICC on the effective date of that legislation shall be decided under the law in effect prior to January 1, 1996, insofar as they involve functions retained by the Act. This notice relates to a proceeding that was pending with the ICC prior to January 1, 1996, and to functions that are subject to Board jurisdiction pursuant to section 10903. Therefore, this notice applies the law in effect prior to the Act, and citations are to the former sections of the statute, unless otherwise indicated.

² See *Exempt. of Rail Abandonment—Offers of Finan. Assist.*, 4 I.C.C. 2d 164 (1987).

DeRoche, Weiner, Brodsky, Sidman & Kider, 1350 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005-4797.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 927-5660. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., Room 2229, 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20423. Telephone: (202) 289-4357/4359. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 927-5721.]

Decided: March 14, 1996.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Simmons, and Commissioner Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-7420 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

[Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 36X)]¹

**Soo Line Railroad Company—
Abandonment Exemption—in Stearns
and Morrison Counties, MN**

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of exemption.

SUMMARY: The Board, under 49 U.S.C. 10505, exempts from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903-04 the abandonment by Soo Line Railroad Company (Soo) of the remaining 60.22 miles of its Brooten Line between milepost 104.00 near Brooten and milepost 164.22 near Genola (end of line), in Stearns and Morrison Counties, MN, subject to standard labor protective conditions, environmental conditions, and a public use condition.

DATES: Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance has been received, this exemption will be effective on April 26, 1996. Formal expressions of intent to file an offer² of financial assistance under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2) must be filed by April 8, 1996; petitions to stay must be filed by April 11, 1996; requests for a public use condition must be filed

by April 16, 1996; and petitions to reopen must be filed by April 22, 1996. **ADDRESSES:** Send pleadings referring to Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 36X) to: (1) Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423, and (2) Larry D. Starns, 1000 Soo Line Building, 105 South 5th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 927-5660. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., Room 2229, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423. Telephone: (202) 289-4357/4359. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 927-5721.]

Decided: March 13, 1996.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Simmons, and Commissioner Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-7419 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

**Agency Information Collection
Activities; Proposed Collection;
Comment Request**

AGENCY: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this information collection. This request for comment is being made pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Comments should address the accuracy of the burden estimates and ways to minimize the burden including the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other

forms of information technology, as well as other relevant aspects of the information collection.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposal for the collection of information should be received on or before May 28, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Gladys Lane, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (00SB), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. All comments will become a matter of public record and will be summarized in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. This document solicits comments concerning the following information collection:

OMB Control Number: 2900-0444.

Title and Form Number: VAAR Subpart 819.70, Veteran-Owned and Operated Small Business, (Exceptions to SF 18 and SF 129).

Type of Review: Reinstatement without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

Need and Uses: The information will be used by VA to identify veteran-owned business to ensure eligible veteran-owned firms are given an opportunity to participate in VA solicitations for goods and services. Without this information there would be no way to properly monitor this program.

Current Actions: Public Law 93-237, amended the Small Business Act by directing the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to give "special consideration" to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in all SBA programs. In September 1983, VA adopted the "special consideration" philosophy and directed all VA contracting activities to take affirmative action to solicit and assist Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned small businesses to participate in VA acquisition process. This established VA Vietnam Era and Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Outreach Program. In October 1983, VA received OMB approval to modify SF 18, Request for Quotations, and SF 129, Solicitation Mailing List Application, to include Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned information. On April 5, 1990, the Secretary approved an initiative to expand the Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned small business program to include all veteran-owned small

² See *Exempt. of Rail Abandonment—Offers of Finan. Assist.*, 4 I.C.C.2d 164 (1987).