

other measure that impedes trade in goods and services with the United States. Comments received will be considered in developing U.S. positions and objectives in the process of negotiating the bilateral trade agreement.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted on or before noon on Monday, December 16, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be submitted to Joseph Damond, Director for Southeast Asia, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20508.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph Damond, Director for Southeast Asia, at (202) 395-6813, or Thomas Robertson, Associate General Counsel, at (202) 395-6800.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The United States is currently in the process of negotiating a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. That agreement will be subject to the terms of Title IV of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 USC 401 et seq.), which defines the terms of trade relations with non-market economies. Title IV mandates that bilateral trade agreements between the United States and countries subject to its provisions address a number of issues, including (1) suspension or termination for national security reasons, (2) safeguard arrangements, (3) the protection of intellectual property rights, (4) the settlement of commercial differences and disputes, (5) the promotion of trade, and (6) consultations. In addition to these provisions, the trade agreement may address other issues, including the following: the grant of most-favored-nation treatment and national treatment to the products of the other country; the grant of trading rights; the elimination of market access barriers (e.g., tariffs, import and export restrictions, quotas, licensing requirements, customs valuation, and fees and charges); the transparency of legal and regulatory regimes; state trading and industrial subsidies; government procurement; trade-related investment measures; trade in services; and investment restrictions..

USTR invites written comments from the public on market access and any other issues to be addressed in the course of the negotiations with Vietnam on the bilateral trade agreement. All comments will be considered in developing U.S. positions and objectives during these negotiations on each of the issues noted above or otherwise raised by the public. Issues of interest might include, but are not necessarily limited to: (a) comments on possible tariff reductions and the removal of border

measures such as quotas or import licensing requirements; (b) uniform application of the trading system; (c) the provision of national treatment and nondiscriminatory treatment for imports, especially in the area of domestic taxation; (d) transparency in application of trade laws and regulations; (e) right of appeal in cases involving application of trade laws and other laws concerning trade-related issues, such as protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR), foreign investment and services; (f) customs processing issues, such as document certification prior to export, fees, customs valuation, and certification requirements; (g) subsidies and domestic support and incentives; (h) safeguard and unfair trade practice procedures applied to imports; (i) plant, animal, and human health and safety requirements; (j) food standards and other technical barriers to trade; (k) activities of state trading enterprises, including restrictions and other trade-distorting practices; (l) price controls and policies; (m) government procurement practices; and (n) the trade-related aspects of investment policies and the protection and enforcement of IPRs. Market access issues for services include, but are not limited to, the right of establishment for U.S. services providers, the ability to provide services on a cross-border basis, and the ability of persons to enter temporarily to provide services. Information on products or practices subject to these negotiations should include, whenever appropriate, the relevant import or export tariff classification number used.

#### Public Comment: Requirements for Submissions

Comments must be in English and provided with fifteen copies. A person requesting that information contained in a comment submitted by that person be treated as confidential business information must certify that such information is business confidential and would not customarily be released to the public by the commenting party. Confidential business information must be clearly marked "BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL" in a contrasting color ink at the top of each page of each copy.

A person requesting that information or advice contained in a comment submitted by that person, other than business confidential information, be treated as confidential in accordance with section 135(g)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155)—

(1) Must so designate that information or advice;

(2) Must clearly mark the material as "CONFIDENTIAL" in a contrasting color ink at the top of each page of each copy; and

(3) Is encouraged to provide a non-confidential summary of the information or advice.

USTR will maintain a file containing the public versions of comments, accessible to the public, in the USTR Reading Room: Room 101, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, N.W., Washington DC 20508. The public file will include a listing of any comments made to USTR from the public with respect to the proceeding. An appointment to review the public file may be made by calling Brenda Webb, (202) 395-6186. The USTR Reading Room is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Jennifer Hillman,

General Counsel.

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 186X)]

#### Norfolk and Western Railway Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Polk County, IA

Norfolk and Western Railway Company (NW) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon its 1.21-mile line of railroad between Station 422+69.9 and Station 486+64 in Clive, Polk County, IA.

NW has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.*—

**Abandonment—Goshen**, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on December 25, 1996, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>1</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>2</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29<sup>3</sup> must be filed by December 5, 1996. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by December 16, 1996, with: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: James R. Paschall, General Attorney, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Three Commercial Place, Norfolk, VA 23510.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

NW has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by November 29, 1996. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 3219, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling Elaine Kaiser, Chief of SEA, at (202) 927-6248. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Decided: November 18, 1996.

<sup>1</sup> The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

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

<sup>3</sup> The Board will accept late-filed trail use requests as long as the abandonment has not been consummated and the abandoning railroad is willing to negotiate an agreement.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### International Trade Data System Project Office; Proposed Collection; Comment Request

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3505(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the International Trade Data System Project Office within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the North American Trade Automation Prototype (NATAP).

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before January 31, 1997, to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to The Department of the Treasury, International Trade Data Systems Project Office, Attn.: William Nolle, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, ICC-3130, Washington, DC 20229, Telephone (202) 927-1826.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the instructions should be directed to The Department of the Treasury, International Trade Data Systems Project Office, Attn.: William Nolle, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, ICC-3130, Washington, DC 20229, Telephone (202) 927-1826. Information concerning NATAP can also be obtained at the following Web Site: [www.itds.treas.gov](http://www.itds.treas.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Title:** North American Trade Automation Prototype (NATAP)

**OMB Number:** 1501-0162

**Abstract:** After extensive consultation with the trade community in the three countries, the NAFTA Information Exchange and Automation Working Group developed the North American Trade Automation Prototype (NATAP). NATAP is a prototype developed by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to experiment with standardized data, advanced

automation, technologies, communications, and encryption designed to reduce costs and improve trade among the three NAFTA countries. This is mandated by Article 512 of the NAFTA. NATAP has been endorsed by the three governments and their trade communities as a limited six month test to be conducted at two US/Canada and four US/Mexico border locations. After the six month prototype, NATAP will stop; the governments and trade community will conduct joint and individual evaluations of the concepts experienced in NATAP and will determine the next steps in the development of improved North American trade processes.

In addition to the international aspects of North American trade, the intent of the U.S. Treasury, International Trade Data System Project Office is to demonstrate the integration of individual U.S. federal agency trade procedures into a comprehensive international trade process that includes the clearance and admissibility of goods, drivers/crew, and conveyances for purposes of enforcement, revenue, health and safety, etc.

**Current Actions:** The three governments have agreed to a six month test for NATAP. However, given the nature of NATAP and the extensive coordination of activities among the participating federal trade agencies in three separate countries and the installation of technology at all locations, involving federal, state/provincial, local, and private interests the Working Group and the trade community have agreed that the six month prototype period will begin for all six locations after NATAP becomes operational at the last location. While NATAP may be operational at the first location on November 1, 1996, the last location may not be operational until March 1, 1997. Accordingly, the official prototype period would not begin until March 1, 1997. Due to these unforeseen and unpredictable delays, the Department of Treasury is requesting that this clearance be effective until December 21, 1997.

Volunteers have agreed to participate in NATAP in order to provide traders with the opportunity to experiment with these advanced technologies and procedures with minimal expense. Through their evaluation of NATAP, they will have input into future trade processes and requirements.

**Type of Review:** Extension.

**Affected Public:** Importers, exporters, customs house brokers, carriers (truck and rail) who have volunteered to participate in NATAP.