discussing recommendations. It is planned to have a break-out meeting in the late afternoon as part of the convention to brief attendees on the Committee's progress to date.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 16, 1997.

S. Mark Lindsey,

Chief Counsel.

[FR Doc. 97–10237 Filed 4–18–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Contract DTRS–56–96–C–0010]

Third Quarterly Performance Review Meeting on the Contract ''Detection of Mechanical Damage in Pipelines''

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: RSPA invites the pipeline industry, in-line inspection (''smart pig'') vendors, and the general public to the third quarterly performance review meeting of progress on the contract ''Detection of Mechanical Damage in Pipelines.'' The meeting is open to anyone, and no registration is required. This contract is being performed by Battelle Memorial Institute (Battelle), along with the Southwest Research Institute, and Iowa State University. The contract is a research and development contract to develop electromagnetic in-line inspection technologies to detect and characterize mechanical damage and stress corrosion cracking. There will be a presentation on the status of the contract tasks, including a summary of the activity and progress during the past quarter and the projected activity for the next quarter.

DATES: The third quarterly performance review meeting will be held on May 5, 1997, beginning at 12:30 p.m. and ending around 4:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The quarterly review meeting will be held in rooms 6332–36 of the Department of Transportation Headquarters Building, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, DC. Non-government personnel must enter the building through the southwest entrance in order to receive a temporary building pass.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lloyd W. Ulrich, Contracting Officer's Technical Representative, Office of Pipeline Safety, telephone:(202) 366–4556, FAX: (202) 366–4566, e-mail: lloyd.ulrich@rspa.dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

RSPA is holding quarterly public meetings on the status of its contract ''Detection of Mechanical Damage in Pipelines'' (Contract DTRS–56–96–C–0010) because in-line inspection research is of immediate interest to the pipeline industry and in-line inspection vendors. RSPA will continue this practice throughout the two- or three-year period of the contract. The meetings will allow disclosure of the results to all interested parties and will provide an opportunity for interested parties to ask Battelle questions concerning the research.

The first meeting was conducted on October 22, 1996, in Washington, DC. The second quarterly review meeting was held on January 14, 1997 in Houston, Texas, in parallel with a meeting of the Gas Research Institute's (GRI) Nondestructive Evaluation Technical Advisory Group to enable significant participation by pipeline operators and inspection vendors. This, the third quarterly review meeting is being held in Washington in advance of the May 6–7, 1997, meetings of RSPA's two technical advisory committees, the Technical Pipeline Safety Standards Committee (TPSSC) for gas pipelines and the Technical Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Standards Committee (THLPSSC) for hazardous liquid pipelines. Each committee is a 15 member, Congressionally mandated advisory committee (49 U.S.C. 60115) responsible for reviewing proposed pipeline safety standards for technical feasibility, reasonableness, and practicability. An announcement of the TPSSC and THLPSSC meetings appeared in the **Federal Register** on April 4, 1997 (62 FR 16212). The advisory committee members have been invited to this quarterly review meeting in order for interested members to obtain a detailed briefing on the status of the research.

The research contract with Battelle is a cooperative effort between GRI and DOT, with GRI providing technical guidance.[1] Future meetings may be conducted in Columbus, Ohio (Battelle); San Antonio, Texas (Southwest Research Institute); Ames, Iowa (Iowa State University); or Chicago, Illinois (Gas Research Institute). It is anticipated that every other meeting will be conducted in Washington, DC. Each of the future meetings will be announced in the **Federal Register** at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Attendance is open to all and does not require advanced registration nor advanced notification to RSPA. However, we specifically want that segment of the pipeline industry involved with in-line inspection to be aware of the status of this contract. To assure that the industry is well represented at these meetings, we have invited the major domestic in-line inspection company (Tuboscope-Vetco Pipeline Services) and the following pipeline industry trade associations: American Petroleum Institute, Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, and the American Gas Association. Each has named an engineering/technical representative.

II. The Contract

The Battelle contract is a research and development contract to evaluate and develop in-line inspection technologies for detecting mechanical damage and cracking, such as stress-corrosion cracking (SCC), in natural gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Third-party mechanical damage is one of the largest causes of pipeline failure, but existing in-line inspection tools cannot always detect or accurately characterize the severity of some types of third-party damage that can threaten pipeline integrity. Although SCC is not very common on pipelines, it usually appears in high-stress, low-population-density areas and only when a limited set of environmental conditions are met. Several attempts have been made to develop an in-line inspection tool for SCC, but there is no commercially successful tool on the market.

Under the contract, Battelle will evaluate and advance magnetic flux leakage (MFL) inspection technology for detecting mechanical damage and two electromagnetic technologies for detecting SCC. The focus is on MFL for mechanical damage because experience shows MFL can characterize some types of mechanical damage and can be successfully used for metal-loss corrosion under a wide variety of conditions. The focus for SCC is on electromagnetic technologies that can be used in conjunction with, or as a modification to, MFL tools. The technologies to be evaluated take advantage of the MFL magnetizer either by enhancing signals or using electrical currents that are generated by the passage of an inspection tool through a pipeline.

The contract includes two major tasks during the base two years of the contract. Task 1 is to evaluate existing

[1] See the notice of the first quarterly performance review meeting (61 FR 53484; Oct. 11, 1996) for information on the Memorandum of Understanding between DOT and GRI.

MFL signal generation and analysis methods to establish a baseline from which today's tools can be evaluated and tomorrow's advances measured. Then, it will develop improvements to signal analysis methods and verify them through testing under realistic pipeline conditions. Finally, it will build an experience base and defect sets to generalize the results from individual tools and analysis methods to the full range of practical applications.

Task 2 is to evaluate two inspection technologies for detecting stress corrosion cracks. The focus in Task 2 is on electromagnetic techniques that have been developed in recent years and that could be used on or as a modification to existing MFL tools. Three subtasks will evaluate velocity-induced remote-field techniques, remote-field eddy-current techniques, and external techniques for sizing stress corrosion cracks.

A Task 3 is being considered for an option year to the contract. Task 3, if done, will verify the results from Tasks 1 and 2 by tests under realistic pipeline conditions. Task 3 will (1) extend the mechanical damage detection, signal decoupling, and sizing algorithms developed in the basic program to include the effects of pressure, (2) verify the algorithms under pressurized conditions in GRI's 4,700 foot, 24-inch diameter Pipeline Simulation Facility (PSF) flow loop, and (3) evaluate the use of eddy-current techniques for characterizing cold working within mechanical damage.

A drawback of present pig technology is the lack of a reliable pig performance verification procedure that is generally accepted by the pipeline industry and RSPA. The experience gained by the pipeline industry and RSPA with the use of the PSF flow loop in this project will provide a framework to develop procedures for evaluating pig performance. Defect detection reliability is critical if instrumented pigging is to be used as an in-line inspection tool in pipeline industry risk management programs.

The ultimate benefits of the project could be more efficient and cost-effective operations, maintenance programs to monitor and enhance the safety of gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Pipeline companies will benefit from having access to inspection technologies for detecting critical mechanical damage and stress-corrosion cracks. Inspection tool vendors will benefit by understanding where improvements are beneficial and needed. These benefits will support RSPA's long-range objective of ensuring the safety and reliability of the gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline infrastructure.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 15, 1997.

Richard D. Huriaux,

Acting Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 97–10196 Filed 4–18–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–60–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33346]

Soo Line Railroad Company—Temporary Trackage Rights Exemption—I&M Rail Link, LLC

I&M Rail Link, LLC (I&M) has agreed to grant temporary local and overhead trackage rights to Soo Line Railroad Company d/b/a/ Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) over I&M's trackage between milepost 123.8 near Comus and milepost 100.5 near Owatonna, in Rice and Steele Counties, MN.

This notice is related to I&M Rail Link, LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Certain Lines of Soo Line Railroad Company D/B/A/ Canadian Pacific Railway, STB Finance Docket No. 33326 (STB served April 2, 1997). The purpose of the trackage rights is to permit CPR to provide continuous service on the line until I&M commences operations on the line. CPR has submitted a filing in support of the notice. The temporary trackage rights will be effective on April 12, 1997, and will terminate automatically on April 12, 1999.[1]

As a condition to this exemption, any employees affected by the trackage rights will be protected by the conditions imposed in Norfolk and Western Ry. Co.—Trackage Rights—BN, 354 I.C.C. 605 (1978), as modified in Mendocino Coast Ry., Inc.—Lease and Operate, 360 I.C.C. 653 (1980). This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(7). If it contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio.* Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

[1] The Board has previously authorized temporary or limited term trackage rights. Limiting the term of the trackage rights is consistent with the limited scope of the transaction. Se, e.g., Union Pacific Railroad Company—Trackage Rights Exemption—Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad Company, STB Finance Docket No. 32959 (Sub-No. 1) (STB served July 25, 1996).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33346, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Larry D. Starns, Esq., Leonard, Street and Deinard, 150 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

Decided: April 15, 1997.

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

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97–10235 Filed 4–18–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–00–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33388]

CSX Corporation and CSX Transportation, Inc., Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway Company—Control and Operating Leases/Agreements—Conrail Inc. and Consolidated Rail Corporation

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board, DOT.

ACTION: Decision No. 2; Notice of prefiling notification and request for comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 49 CFR 1180.4(b), CSX Corporation (CSXC), CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), Norfolk Southern Corporation (NSC), Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR), Conrail Inc. (CRI), and Consolidated Rail Corporation (CRC)[1] have notified the Surface Transportation Board (Board) of their intent to file a joint application seeking authority under 49 U.S.C. 11323–25 for: (1) The acquisition of control, by CSX and NS, of CRI, which is to be jointly owned by CSXC and NSC, by and through a special purpose limited liability company (LLC) and LLC's wholly owned subsidiary, Green Acquisition Corporation (Acquisition); and (2) as soon as practicable after the authorization and exercise of such control, the division of Conrail's assets into (a) certain assets which will continue to be held by CRI and CRC or their subsidiaries and operated for Conrail's account and that

[1] CSXC and CSXT are referred to collectively as CSX. NSC and NSR are referred to collectively as NS. CRI and CRC are referred to collectively as Conrail. CSX, NS, and Conrail are referred to collectively as applicants.