

If you have access to the Internet you can view and comment on this notice by going to: <http://www.regulations.gov/#/home> and searching for docket number DOS-2017-0025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neal Morris, (202) 647-9312, or Laura Buffo, (202) 395-9424

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Article 17.5 of the CAFTA-DR establishes an Environmental Affairs Council (the Council) and, unless the CAFTA-DR parties otherwise agree, requires it to meet annually to oversee the implementation of, and review progress under, Chapter 17. Article 17.5 further requires, unless the parties otherwise agree, that each meeting of the Council includes a session in which members of the Council have an opportunity to meet with the public to discuss matters relating to the implementation of Chapter 17.

On June 21, the Council will meet in a government-to-government session to (1) review any challenges parties are facing in meeting their environment chapter obligations, (2) highlight environmental achievements in the past year and share related lessons learned and best practices; (3) review ongoing work under the environmental cooperation program; and (4) hear a report from the CAFTA-DR Secretariat for Environmental Matters on the status of the public submissions process.

On June 22, the Council invites all interested persons to attend a public session about Chapter 17 implementation, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Costa Rica Marriott Hotel. At the session, the Council will welcome questions, input, and information about challenges and achievements in implementation of the Chapter and the related Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA). Environmental Cooperation Program implementers also will be on site to answer questions and provide more information about their particular projects and programs. If you would like to attend the public session, please notify Neal Morris and Laura Buffo at the email addresses listed under the heading **ADDRESSES**. Please include your full name and identify any organization or group you represent. The Department of State and Office of the United States Trade Representative also invite written comments or suggestions to be submitted before June 8, 2017, regarding topics to be discussed at the Council meeting. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR and the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Agreement (*documents available at [*eqt/trade/caftadr/index.htm and <https://ustr.gov/issue-areas/environment/bilateral-and-regional-trade-agreements>*\). Instructions on how to submit comments are under the heading **ADDRESSES**.](http://www.state.gov/e/oes/</i></p>
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In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to:

- Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR and
- The ECA

These documents are available at: <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/caftadr/index.htm> and <https://ustr.gov/issue-areas/environment/bilateral-and-regional-trade-agreements>. Visit <http://www.state.gov> and the USTR Web site at www.ustr.gov for more information.

Dated: May 18, 2017.

Barton Putney,

Director, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2017-10659 Filed 5-23-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-09-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36118]

Ellis & Eastern Company—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—E&ER Company

Ellis & Eastern Company (Ellis), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire from E&ER Company (E&ER) and operate approximately 7.6 miles of rail line, between approximately milepost 41.4, near Manley, Minn., and milepost 49.0, in or near Brandon, S.D., in Rock County, Minn., and Minnehaha County, S.D. (the Line).¹ According to Ellis, the Line is in poor repair and in need of rehabilitation, and has not been operated over since at least 1994, when E&ER acquired the Line.

According to Ellis, it has reached an agreement with E&ER to acquire the trackage, right-of-way, and real property interests of the line owned by E&ER. Ellis also states that the proposed transaction does not involve any provision that may limit future interchange of traffic with any third-party carrier.

Ellis certifies that the projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in its becoming a Class II or Class I rail carrier and will not exceed \$5 million.

¹ This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Ellis & Eastern Co.—Operation Exemption—Buffalo Ridge Regional Railroad Authority*, Docket No. FD 36119, wherein Ellis seeks to lease and operate approximately 41.44 miles of Buffalo Ridge Regional Railroad's rail line between approximately milepost 0.0 at Agate, Minn., and milepost 41.44 near Manley, Minn.

The transaction may be consummated on June 7, 2017, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the exemption was filed).

According to Ellis, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic review under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

If the verified notice 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. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than May 31, 2017 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36118, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on John E. Taylor, Taylor Law Firm, LLC, 4820 East 57th St., Suite B, Sioux Falls, SD 57108.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at WWW.STB.GOV.

Decided: May 19, 2017.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2017-10653 Filed 5-23-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36119]

Ellis & Eastern Company—Operation Exemption—Buffalo Ridge Regional Railroad Authority

Ellis & Eastern Company (Ellis), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to lease and operate approximately 41.44 miles of rail line from Buffalo Ridge Regional Railroad Authority (BRRRA). The rail line extends from approximately milepost 0.0, at the intersection with the main line of Union Pacific Railroad Company, at Agate, Minn., and milepost 41.44, at the intersection with the center line of the main track of BNSF Railway Company, near Manley, Minn., in Nobles and Rock Counties, Minn. (the Line).¹

¹ This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Ellis & Eastern Co.—Acquisition & Operation Exemption—E & ER Co.*, Docket No. FD 36118, wherein Ellis seeks to

According to Ellis, Ellis and BRRRA have reached an agreement whereby Ellis will lease, operate, and maintain the trackage, right-of-way, and real property interests of the Line.

Ellis certifies that the projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not exceed \$5 million and will not result in its becoming a Class I or Class II rail carrier. Ellis states that the proposed transaction does not include any provision that may limit Ellis' ability to interchange with a third-party carrier.

The proposed transaction may be consummated on or after June 7, 2017, the effective date of the exemption.

If the verified notice 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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than May 31, 2017 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36119, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on John E. Taylor, Taylor Law Firm, LLC, 4820 East 57th St., Suite B, Sioux Falls, SD 57108.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at "WWW.STB.GOV."

Decided: May 19, 2017.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2017-10652 Filed 5-23-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2017-0035]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

Under part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), this document provides the public notice that on April 26, 2016, Grenada Railroad, LLC (GRYR), the operator of trackage owned by North Central Mississippi Regional Railroad Authority (NCMRRA) requested that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant

temporary relief from the requirements of 49 CFR 234.247, *Purpose of inspections and tests; removal from service of relay or device failing to meet test requirements*, to allow GRYR to operate over non-functioning highway-rail grade crossings (HRGC) without making the inspections and tests required in 49 CFR 234.249 through 234.271. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA-2017-0035.

The reason for relief from the requirements is that prior to the purchase of the railroad by NCMRRA, the previous owner removed major components from the HRGC warning systems, bungalows, signals, and gates. As part of GRYR's commitment to provide rail services to those that require it, GRYR must access areas of the railroad previously deemed out of service. GRYR proposes to operate over affected HRGCs by the following alternative method:

- Making all movements over HRGC in daylight hours.
- Working with local authorities to obtain permission to close the roadway at a HRGC requiring occupation by a train.
- Stationing an employee at each crossing to provide warning to approaching highway traffic and communicate with motorists as needed.

GRYR requests to use the proposed method of alternative protection on the GRYR Subdivision, between milepost (MP) 629 near Duck Hill, MS, and MP 686 south of Durant, MS, for a period not to extend beyond December 31, 2017. During this time period, GRYR plans to acquire and install the equipment necessary to bring the HRGC warning systems into compliance.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at www.regulations.gov and in person at the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Docket Operations Facility, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Operations Facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested parties desire an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the

appropriate docket number and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **Web site:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- **Fax:** 202-493-2251.
- **Mail:** Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.
- **Hand Delivery:** 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Communications received by July 10, 2017 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered if practicable.

Anyone can search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the document, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its processes. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>. See also <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice> for the privacy notice of www.regulations.gov.

Robert C. Lauby,
Associate Administrator for Safety, Chief Safety Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017-10644 Filed 5-23-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2016-0108]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

Under part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), this document provides public notice that on April 26, 2017, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to modify an existing waiver of compliance from certain provisions of the Federal railroad safety regulations in 49 CFR part 236. FRA assigned the petition docket number FRA-2016-0108.

UP seeks a modification to its existing waiver from compliance with cab signal

acquire a 7.6-mile line of railroad from E & ER between Brandon, S.D., and Manley, Minn.