

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 January 18, 1997, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29³ must be filed by December 30, 1996. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by January 8, 1997, 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: Robert J. Koch, Esq., Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad Company, 135 Jamison Lane, P.O. Box 68, Monroeville, PA 15146.

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

B&LE 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 December 24, 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: December 12, 1996.

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

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-32231 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

[STB Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1172X)]

Consolidated Rail Corporation; Abandonment Exemption in Middlesex County, NJ

Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon a 1.08-mile portion of its line of railroad known as the Raritan North Shore Industrial Track between milepost 0.00 and milepost 1.08 in the city of Perth Amboy, Middlesex County, NJ.

Conrail 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 January 18, 1997, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹

formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29³ must be filed by December 30, 1996. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by January 8, 1997, 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: John K. Enright, Associate General Counsel, Consolidated Rail Corporation, 2001 Market Street—16A, Philadelphia, PA 19101-1416.

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

Conrail 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 December 24, 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: December 12, 1996.

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

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-32230 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special-Disabilities Programs, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-

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.

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

³ 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.

¹ 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.

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

³ 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.

¹ 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-*

463 that a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special-Disabilities Programs will be held on January 8, 1997, at VA Headquarters, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. The meeting will be held in Room 930 and commence at 2:30 p.m. and adjourn no later than 4:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is for VA to solicit input from the Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special-Disabilities Programs concerning VA's implementation of section 1706 of 38, U.S.C., (Public Law 104-262, The Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act). Specifically, a draft decision paper regarding VA's definition of capacity and special disability programs will be discussed. Due to the fact that Committee members are located geographically across the country and that this meeting is anticipated to be held no longer than two hours, members of the Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special-Disabilities Programs will be contacted for this meeting via conference call.

The meeting is open to the public. Due to the shortness of the meeting, public participation is restricted to written comments. Comments should be submitted 5 days before the meeting or 10 days after the meeting. For those wishing to attend, and/or requesting a copy of Public Law 102-262, section 1706 or additional information concerning the meeting, please contact Kathy Pessagno, Veterans Health Administration (113), phone (202) 273-8512, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, prior to January 7, 1997. All written comments received

will be available for public inspection at the above address.

Dated: December 12, 1996.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 96-32180 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M

Scientific Review and Evaluation Board for Health Services Research and Development Service, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, gives notice under Pub. L. 92-463, that a meeting of the Scientific Review and Evaluation Board for Health Services Research and Development Service will be held at the Sheraton Gunter Hotel, 205 E. Houston Street, San Antonio, TX, January 7 through January 9, 1997. The session on January 7, 1997, is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. and end at 5 p.m. (Central Time). The sessions scheduled for January 8 and 9 are scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. (Central Time). The purpose of the meeting is to review research and development applications concerned with the measurement and evaluation of health care systems and with testing new methods of health care delivery and management. Applications are reviewed for scientific and technical merit. Recommendations regarding their funding are prepared for the Chief Research and Development Officer (12).

This meeting will be open to the public (to the seating capacity of the room) at the start of the January 7

session for approximately one half-hour to cover administrative matters and to discuss the general status of the program. The closed portion of the meeting involves discussion, examination, reference to, and oral review of staff and consultant critiques of research protocols and similar documents. During this portion of the meeting, discussion and recommendations will deal with the qualifications of the personnel conducting the studies (the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy), as well as research information (the premature disclosure of which would be likely to frustrate significantly implementation of proposed agency action regarding such research projects). As provided by the subsection 10(d) of Pub. L. 92-463, as amended by Pub. L. 94-409, closing portions of these meetings are in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c) (6) and (9)(B).

Due to the limited seating capacity of the room, those who plan to attend the open session should contact Mr. E. William, M.S.H.A., Review Program Manager (124F), Health Services Research and Development Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., at least five days before the meeting. For further information, he can be reached at 202.273.8254.

Dated: December 12, 1996.

By Direction of the Secretary:

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 96-32179 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M