

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Maritime Administration****[Docket No. MARAD-98-3330]****Information Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations****ACTION:** Notice and Request for Comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD's) intentions to request extension of approval for three years of a currently approved information collection.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted on or before March 27, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Patricia Ann Thomas, Office of Maritime Labor, Training and Safety, MAR-250, Room 7302, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone number 202-366-2646 or fax number 202-493-2288. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title of Collection:* Merchant Marine Medals and Awards.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*OMB Control Number:* 2133-0506.

*Form Number:* No form is required for this collection.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* September 30, 1998.

*Summary of Collection of Information:* This information collection provides the Maritime Administration with a method for documenting and processing requests for merchant marine medals and decorations to masters, officers, and crew members of U.S. ships in recognition of their service in areas of danger during World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Operation DESERT STORM and the replacement of previously issued awards.

*Need and Use of the Information:* The information collection is used by MARAD personnel to process and verify requests for service awards. The issuance of awards is based upon requests from the public.

*Description of Respondents:* Eligible merchant seamen.

*Annual Responses:* 2500 responses.

*Annual Burden:* 2500 hours.

*Comments:* Signed, written comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk,

U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. Specifically, address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t. Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Dated: January 20, 1998.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

**Joel C. Richard,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-1710 Filed 1-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****[Docket No. NHTSA-97-3122; Notice 2]****Dan Hill & Associates, Inc.; Grant of Application for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224**

This document grants the application by Dan Hill & Associates, Inc., of Norman, Oklahoma, for a one-year temporary exemption from Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224 *Rear Impact Protection*. The basis of the application was that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with the standard.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on November 21, 1997, and an opportunity afforded for comment (62 FR 62398).

The applicant manufactures and sells a horizontal discharge trailer ("Flow Boy") that is used in the road construction industry to deliver asphalt and other road building materials to the construction site. The Flow Boy is designed to connect with and latch onto various paving machines ("pavers"). The Flow Boy, with its hydraulically controlled horizontal discharge system, discharges hot mix asphalt at a controlled rate into a paver which overlays the road surface with asphalt material.

Standard No. 224 requires, effective January 26, 1998, that all trailers with a GVWR of 4536 Kg or more, including

Flow Boy trailers, be fitted with a rear impact guard that conforms to Standard No. 223 *Rear impact guards*. Installation of the rear impact guard will prevent the Flow Boy from connecting to the paver. Thus, Flow Boy trailers will no longer be functional and contractors will be forced to use standard dump body trucks or trailers with their inherent limitations.

The applicant, which manufactured 81 Flow Boy trailers in 1996 (plus 21 other trailers), asked for a one-year exemption in order to explore the feasibility of a rear impact guard that will allow the Flow Boy trailer to connect to a conventional paver. In the absence of an exemption, it believes that approximately 60 percent of its work force would have to be laid off. Its gross revenues would decrease by \$6,000,000 (these have averaged \$13,885,000 over its 1994, 1995, and 1996 fiscal years). Present studies show that the placement of the retractable rear impact guard would likely catch excess asphalt as it was discharged into the pavement hopper. Further, the increased cost of the Flow Body would likely cause contractors to choose the cheaper alternative of dump trucks. Finally, the applicant asserted that the increased weight of the retractable rear impact guard would significantly decrease the payload of the Flow Boy.

Applicant sent its Product Specialist to Germany in 1994 to view underdrive protection guards installed by a German customer on Flow Boy trailers but the technology proved inapplicable because of differences between German and American pavers. Manufacturers of paving machines are not interested in redesigning their equipment to accommodate a Flow Boy with a rear impact guard. The applicant has contacted a British manufacturer of a retractable rear impact guard but the information received to date does not look encouraging. If an exemption is granted, the applicant will continue to explore the feasibility of a retractable rear guard that allows connection with a paver.

The applicant believes that an exemption would be in the public interest and consistent with traffic safety objectives because the Flow Boy aids in the construction of the national road system. It spends very little of its operating life on the highway and the likelihood of its being involved in a rear-end collision is minimal. In addition, the design of the Flow Boy is such that the rear tires act as a buffer and reduce the likelihood of impact with the trailer.

No comments were received in response to the **Federal Register** notice.

The applicant differs from the usual hardship petitioner in that it is a corporation whose net revenues are positive and healthy. The hardship to be borne in this instance is the effect of a denial upon the company. The applicant's production is limited in number; it produced 102 trailers in 1996, of which 86 are of the type for which exemption is sought. This is approximately 85 percent of its production. Although the remaining trailer types appear to contribute a proportionally greater part of the company's gross revenues, these revenues would decline by a significant percentage. There is also the economic cost, not discussed by the company, of maintaining unused manufacturing facilities and settling accounts with suppliers for goods ordered and canceled.

The company's efforts to comply appear to have been stymied by the unacceptability of a redesign of the Flow Boy to its consumers. Its application indicates that, for the past three years, it has looked at home and abroad in search of a solution that meets both safety and market needs. It will continue to do so if granted an exemption.

The applicant has argued that an exemption is in the public interest because the Flow Boy aids in construction of the national highway system. While the company did not quantify its work force, it estimated that approximately 60 percent of it would have to be laid off in the wake of a denial. Thus, the company could have argued that continued full employment of its work force is also in the public interest.

Finally, the company believes that an exemption is consistent with objectives of motor vehicle safety because the Flow Boy spends very little of its operating life on the highway and the likelihood of it being involved in a rear-end collision is minimal. NHTSA understands this to mean that proportion of time spent in transit on the roads from one job site to another will be small in comparison with the time spent at rest at construction sites amidst other road equipment. This indicates that the exposure of a Flow Boy without a rear underride guard to a potential crash situation will be reduced. The small number of trailers that may be produced under the exemption, less than 100, further reduces the crash potential.

In consideration of the foregoing, it is hereby found that requiring compliance with Standard No. 224 as of its effective date would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has

tried in good faith to comply with the standard. It is also found that an exemption would be in the public interest and consistent with the objectives of motor vehicle safety. Accordingly, the company of Dan Hill & Associates is hereby granted NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 98-1 from 49 CFR 571.224 Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224 *Rear Underride Protection*, expiring February 1, 1999.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 30113, 49 CFR part 555; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on January 20, 1998.

**Ricardo Martinez,**  
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-1784 Filed 1-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33542]

#### CSX Transportation, Inc.—Trackage Rights Exemption—Consolidated Rail Corporation and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad

Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), as owner, and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad Company (IHB), as operator,<sup>1</sup> have agreed to grant overhead trackage rights to CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), to operate its trains, locomotives, cars, and equipment with CSXT's own crews over Conrail's Kankakee Line between Michigan Avenue, Indiana Harbor, IN, milepost 0.0±, and Osborn, IN, milepost 4.8±, at the connection between Conrail's Kankakee Line and the Norfolk and Western Railway Company, a total distance of approximately 4.8 miles. The trackage rights are restricted to bridge traffic only between the termini of the trackage rights for trainload movements of finished automobiles and associated empty equipment to and from the Ford Mixing Center in the Calumet Yard area.

The transaction is expected to be consummated on January 19, 1998, the effective date of the exemption.

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*,

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to a trackage rights agreement, dated April 9, 1906, Conrail granted trackage rights to IHB to operate over portions of its railroad, including that portion of the Kankakee Line which CSXT will acquire upon the effective date of this exemption. Since IHB acts as agent on behalf of Conrail in the performance of supervision, control and maintenance of this line of railroad, IHB is included as a party to the trackage rights agreement.

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 the 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.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33542, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001 and served on: Charles M. Rosenberger, Senior Counsel, CSX Transportation, Inc., 500 Water Street, J-150, Jacksonville, FL 32202.

Decided: January 16, 1998.

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

**Vernon A. Williams,**

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-1755 Filed 1-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Bureau of the Public Debt

#### 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, Pub. L. 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently the Bureau of the Public Debt within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the Regulations Governing United States Savings Bonds Series E/EE and H/HH.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before March 30, 1998, to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Bureau of the Public Debt, Vicki S. Thorpe, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information should be directed to Vicki S. Thorpe, Bureau of the Public Debt, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328, (304) 480-6553.