

The northern terminus of the project will connect to the U.S. 65 (Future I-530) Bypass near Pine Bluff, Arkansas and the southern terminus will have an interim connection to U.S. 278 in the Monticello and Warren, Arkansas vicinity. The proposed connector was identified in Section 1211(h) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), as amended.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in this project. A series of public meetings will be held within the study area beginning in the fall of 1999, with on-going public involvement activities. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to a formal public hearing. Public notice will be given of the time and place for all meetings and hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this project are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this proposed action.)

Issued on: July 20, 1999.

Elizabeth Romero,

Environmental Specialist, FHWA, Little Rock, Arkansas.

[FR Doc. 99-19338 Filed 7-28-99 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance from certain requirements of its safety regulations. The individual petition is described below including, the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway

[Docket Number FRA-1999-5895]

Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway (BNSF) seeks a permanent waiver of compliance from certain provisions of the Safety Appliances Standards, 49 CFR part 231, and Power Brakes and Drawbars regulations, 49 CFR part 232, concerning RoadRailer® train operations over their railroad system. Specifically, BNSF requests relief from the requirements of: 49 CFR part 231, which specifies the number, location and dimensional specifications for handholds, ladders, sill steps, uncoupling levers, and handbrakes; and § 232.2, which regulates drawbar height.

The RoadRailer® units, by design, cannot be subjected to traditional switching or classification procedures, since they do not have the required safety appliance arrangement and their coupler assembly will only couple to another RoadRailer® unit or to a special designed adapter vehicle. In consideration of the unique way RoadRailer® units are assembled, there is no necessity for a person to ride on this equipment. Furthermore, this vehicle has a spring based parking brake (which has replaced the conventional manually operated handbrake) that operates automatically in conjunction with the train air brake system, so there is no need for an individual to mount the vehicle to apply a handbrake. The spring activates the parking brake when air pressure is reduced below a pre-determined value and remains applied until air pressure is restored. The drawbar height is not within the prescribed limits of 31½ to 34½ inches.

BNSF states that they will provide adequate training and familiarization for their operating personnel and emphasize the fact that employees must not attempt to mount or dismount RoadRailer trailers because there are no safety appliances. BNSF would also advise the FRA of any incidents or in-service problems with the RoadRailer equipment. BNSF would restrict the trains to 125 RoadRailer units, excluding the adapter unit, with a maximum of 4800 trailing tons. The adapter unit, CouplerMate, will be used between the hauling locomotive and the first RoadRailer unit in the train. BNSF would only haul hazardous materials listed in Table 2 of 49 CFR 172.504, in RoadRailer vehicles. Brake cylinder piston travel limits for the Mark V RoadRailer equipment would be 1¼ to 3½ inches at initial terminal, with 3⅝ inches being an ineffective brake.

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 party desires 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 (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA-1999-5895) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC, on July 22, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 99-19407 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Docket No. FRA-1999-5517.

Applicant: Fox Valley and Western Limited, Mr. Glenn J. Kerbs, Vice President, engineering, 3000 Minnesota Avenue, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481.

The Fox Valley and Western Limited seeks approval of the proposed

discontinuance and removal of the signal system at Bridge U-104, milepost 112.10, Denmark Subdivision, near Green Bay, Wisconsin, associated with the installation of shore control panels on each side of the bridge, for train crew operation.

The reason given for the proposed changes is that the track has minimal usage and the changes will eliminate the need for train crews to call an operator to open and close the bridge.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the Protester in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, DC, on July 22, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 99-19406 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Discretionary Cooperative Agreements To Support Innovative Programs To Increase Booster Seat and Seat Belt Use Among Children

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Amendment of agency announcement published June 30, 1999, Volume 64, No. 125, and correction published July 8, 1999 Volume 64, No. 130.

SUMMARY: The date for receipt of applications (July 30, 1999, as stated in the July 8, 1999 correction) is hereby extended to 2:00 p.m. E.S.T. on August 13, 1999. Applications must be received by that time and date. Applications postmarked, but not received, by that time and date will not be accepted for evaluation.

Dated: July 23, 1999.

James L. Nichols,

Acting Associate Administrator for Traffic Safety Programs.

[FR Doc. 99-19375 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-98-4683; Notice 02]

RIN 2127-AH35

Final Theft Data; Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Publication of final theft data.

SUMMARY: This document publishes the final data on thefts of model year (MY) 1997 passenger motor vehicles that occurred in calendar year (CY) 1997. The final 1997 theft data indicate a decrease in the vehicle theft rate when compared to the theft rate experienced in CY/MY 1996. The final theft rate for MY 1997 passenger vehicles stolen in calendar year 1997 (3.05 thefts per thousand vehicles produced) decreased by 7 percent from the theft rate for CY/MY 1996 vehicles (3.28 thefts per thousand vehicles produced). Publication of these data fulfills NHTSA's statutory obligation to periodically obtain accurate and timely theft data and publish the information for review and comment. The data were

calculated for informational purposes only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosalind Proctor, Office of Planning and Consumer Programs, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Proctor's telephone number is (202) 366-0846. Her fax number is (202) 493-2739.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NHTSA administers a program for reducing motor vehicle theft. The central feature of this program is the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard, 49 CFR part 541. The standard specifies performance requirements for inscribing and affixing vehicle identification numbers (VINs) onto certain major original equipment and replacement parts of high-theft lines of passenger motor vehicles.

The agency is required by 49 U.S.C. 33104(b)(4) to periodically obtain, from the most reliable source, accurate and timely theft data and publish the data for review and comment. To fulfill this statutory mandate, NHTSA has published theft data annually beginning with MYs 1983/84. Continuing to fulfill the section 33104(b)(4) mandate, this document reports the final theft data for CY 1997, the most recent calendar year for which data are available.

In calculating the 1997 theft rates, NHTSA followed the same procedures it used in calculating the MY 1996 theft rates. (For 1996 theft data calculations, see 63 FR 36478, July 6, 1998.) As in all previous reports, NHTSA's data were based on information provided to NHTSA by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The NCIC is a government system that receives vehicle theft information from nearly 23,000 criminal justice agencies and other law enforcement authorities throughout the United States. The NCIC data also include reported thefts of self-insured and uninsured vehicles, not all of which are reported to other data sources.

The 1997 theft rate for each vehicle line was calculated by dividing the number of reported thefts of MY 1997 vehicles of that line stolen during calendar year 1997 by the total number of vehicles in that line manufactured for MY 1997, as reported to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The final 1997 theft data show a decrease in the vehicle theft rate when compared to the theft rate experienced in CY/MY 1996. The final theft rate for MY 1997 passenger vehicles stolen in CY 1997 decreased to 3.05 thefts per thousand vehicles produced, a decrease