

STAGGERS RAIL ACT OF 1980

[Public Law 96–448; 96th Congress]

[This law has not been amended]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 96–448. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To reform the economic regulation of railroads, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the “Staggers Rail Act of 1980”.

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FINDINGS

SEC. 2. The Congress hereby finds that—

(1) historically, railroads were the essential factor in the national transportation system;

(2) the enactment of the Interstate Commerce Act was essential to prevent an abuse of monopoly power by railroads and to establish and maintain a national railroad network;

¹This item should probably be stricken.

(3) today, most transportation within the United States is competitive;

(4) many of the Government regulations affecting railroads have become unnecessary and inefficient;

(5) nearly two-thirds of the Nation's intercity freight is transported by modes of transportation other than railroads;

(6) earnings by the railroad industry are the lowest of any transportation mode and are insufficient to generate funds for necessary capital improvements;

(7) by 1985, there will be a capital shortfall within the railroad industry of between \$16,000,000,000 and \$20,000,000,000;

(8) failure to achieve increased earnings within the railroad industry will result in either further deterioration of the rail system or the necessity for additional Federal subsidy; and

(9) modernization of economic regulation for the railroad industry with a greater reliance on the marketplace is essential in order to achieve maximum utilization of railroads to save energy and combat inflation.

GOALS

SEC. 3. The purpose of this Act is to provide for the restoration, maintenance, and improvement of the physical facilities and financial stability of the rail system of the United States. In order to achieve this purpose, it is hereby declared that the goals of this Act are—

(1) to assist the railroads of the Nation in rehabilitating the rail system in order to meet the demands of interstate commerce and the national defense;

(2) to reform Federal regulatory policy so as to preserve a safe, adequate, economical, efficient, and financially stable rail system;

(3) to assist the rail system to remain viable in the private sector of the economy;

(4) to provide a regulatory process that balances the needs of carriers, shippers, and the public; and

(5) to assist in the rehabilitation and financing of the rail system.

TITLE I—RAIL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

RAIL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

SEC. 101. **[Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]**

TITLE II—RAILROAD RATES AND INTER-CARRIER PRACTICES

REGULATION OF RAILROAD RATES

SEC. 201. **[Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]**

DETERMINATION OF MARKET DOMINANCE

SEC. 202. **[Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]**

ZONE OF RATE FLEXIBILITY

SEC. 203. [(a) and (b) Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]

(c)(1) Any rail carrier rate which increased over 70 percent between 1976 and 1979 inclusive for the transportation, in shipper owned equipment over a distance exceeding 1,550 miles between points within the United States, of coal pursuant to a tariff calling for an annual volume of more than 2,000,000 tons per year purchased by a municipally owned utility for the generation of electric power under a 20-year purchase agreement entered into by such utility in the year 1974 shall not be increased so long as coal is purchased under such original agreement, except that—

(A) during the period beginning October 1, 1980, and ending September 30, 1987, the Interstate Commerce Commission may permit increases in such rate which result in a revenue-variable cost percentage of not more than 162 percent; and

(B) after October 1, 1987, such rate shall be subject to section 10701a of title 49, United States Code, and related provisions of such title governing regulation of rail carrier rates, except that until such rate results in a revenue-variable cost percentage that is equal to or greater than the revenue-variable cost percentage applicable under section 10709(d) of such title, such rate may not be increased more than 4 percent, in addition to inflation, in any year.

(2) Neither the provisions of this subsection nor any rate subject to this subsection shall be admissible as evidence or considered in any way in any proceeding involving any other rail carrier rate that is commenced to determine market dominance under section 10709 of title 49, United States Code, or to determine reasonableness under section 10701a of such title.

TRANSPORTATION OF RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

SEC. 204. [Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]

RATE REGULATION PROCEEDINGS; ADEQUATE REVENUES

SEC. 205. (a)(1) The Interstate Commerce Commission shall commence a proceeding for purposes of determining whether, and to what extent, product competition should be considered in proceedings under subtitle IV of title 49, United States Code, to determine the reasonableness of rail carrier rates. The Commission shall complete its proceeding under this subsection within 230 days after the effective date of this Act.

(2)(A) For purposes of this subsection, the term “product competition” means the availability to a consignee, at a competitive delivered cost and in sufficient quantities, of products or commodities which are of the same type as the commodity or product to which the rate in question applies, without regard to whether such products or commodities are available from the same or a different origin as those to which the rate applies.

(B) In determining the availability of alternative sources of a particular commodity for purposes of this subsection, such commodity must be capable, by reason of similar specifications, of being effectively utilized by the consignee.

(C) In determining the availability of alternative sources of coal for purposes of this subsection, such coal must be capable, by reason of similar specifications such as Btu's, sulfur content, and ash content, of being effectively utilized by the consignee.

(D) For purposes of this subsection, any coal imported in the United States for the generation of electricity by utilities shall not be taken into account in the determination of whether coal is available to a consignee from another source.

(3)(A) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as requiring the Commission to modify its standards for the determination of the reasonableness of rail carrier rates under existing law and procedures.

(B) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as altering the meaning, use, or interpretation by the Commission, the courts, or any party of the term "market dominance", as defined in section 10709(a) of title 49, United States Code. The enactment of this subsection shall not be considered by the Commission in any proceeding, or by any court on an appeal from that or any other proceeding, to determine the proper scope of the term "market dominance" or whether there is market dominance over the transportation to which any particular rate applies.

(b) **[Omitted—amendatory provisions only.]**

[Sections 206 through 216 omitted—amendatory or obsolete provisions only.]

COMPENSATORY JOINT RATE RELIEF

SEC. 217. (a) **[Omitted—amendatory.]**

(b) For purposes of section 10705a of title 49, United States Code, the Interstate Commerce Commission shall classify all rail carriers on the basis of revenues, shall from time to time review its regulations setting forth revenue-based classifications for rail carriers, and shall make appropriate changes in such regulations in order to reflect inflation. The Commission shall not reclassify switching and terminal carriers, or any other rail carriers not classified on the basis of revenues on the effective date of this Act, for any purpose other than for purposes of such section 10705a.

(c)(1) The Interstate Commerce Commission shall include in its annual report to the Congress under section 10311 of title 49, United States Code, a report with respect to the application of surcharges and the cancellation of the application of joint rates by the Consolidated Rail Corporation and other rail carriers, during the preceding year, under section 10705a of title 49, United States Code. Each such report shall include—

(A) an analysis of the effect of application of surcharges and the cancellation of the application of joint rates under such section 10705a on shippers, ports, class II and class III rail carriers, railroad employees, and other elements of the rail system;

(B)(i) the number of surcharges applied by the Consolidated Rail Corporation and all other rail carriers under such section 10705a and the amount of revenue received by the Corporation and all other rail carriers from the application of such surcharges, (ii) the number of surcharges applied by the Cor-

poration and all other rail carriers that were canceled under the procedures of such section 10705a, and (iii) the number of cancellations of the application of a joint rate by the Corporation and all other rail carriers under such section 10705a; and

(C) an analysis of the operation of the remedies made available to class III rail carriers under subsections (i), (j), and (k) of such section 10705a and to class II and class III rail carriers under subsection (l) of such section 10705a.

(2) The Interstate Commerce Commission shall, within 2 years after the effective date of this Act, submit a report to the Congress with respect to whether the provisions of section 10705a of title 49, United States Code, have adequately addressed the joint rate problems of rail carriers. The report shall include such recommendations with respect to such joint rate problems as the Commission considers necessary and appropriate.

EXPEDITED DIVISION OF REVENUES PROCEEDINGS

SEC. 218. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

RATE BUREAUS

SEC. 219. **【(a) through (e) Omitted—amendatory.】**

(f) The Interstate Commerce Commission may not take any action with respect to the elimination of general rate increases or decreases prior to April 1, 1982.

(g) The Interstate Commerce Commission shall require rail carrier members of a rate bureau to provide the employees of such rate bureau who are affected by the amendments made by this section with fair arrangements no less protective of the interests of such employees than those established pursuant to section 11347 of title 49, United States Code. For purposes of this subsection, the term “employees” does not include any individual serving as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, comptroller, counsel, member of the board of directors, or any other person performing such functions.

LONG AND SHORT HAUL TRANSPORTATION

SEC. 220. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

RAILROAD ENTRY

SEC. 221. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

SERVICE DURING PERIODS OF PEAK DEMAND

SEC. 222. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

RECIPROCAL SWITCHING

SEC. 223. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

CAR SERVICE COMPENSATION

SEC. 224. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

CAR UTILIZATION

SEC. 225. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

CAR SERVICE ORDERS FOR EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES

SEC. 226. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

EMPLOYEE PROTECTION

SEC. 227. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

MERGERS AND OTHER TRANSACTIONS

SEC. 228. **【Omitted—amendatory.】**

SAVINGS PROVISIONS

SEC. 229. (a) Any rate that is in effect on the effective date of this Act for transportation by a rail carrier providing transportation subject to the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission under subchapter I of chapter 105 of title 49, United States Code, may, during the 180-day period beginning on such effective date, be challenged in a complaint filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission by any interested party alleging that the rail carrier has market dominance over the transportation to which the rate applies, as determined under section 10709 of such title, and that the rate is not reasonable under section 10701a of such title.

(b) Any rate described in subsection (a) of this section—

(1) which is not challenged in a complaint filed within the 180-day period provided in such subsection; or

(2) which is challenged in such a complaint, but (A) the rail carrier is found not to have market dominance over the transportation to which the rate applies, or (B) the rate is found to be reasonable,

shall be deemed to be lawful and may not thereafter be challenged in the Commission or in any court (other than on appeal from a decision of the Commission).

(c) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any rate under which the volume of traffic moved during the 12-month period immediately preceding the effective date of this Act did not exceed 500 net tons and has increased tenfold within the 3-year period immediately preceding the bringing of a challenge to the reasonableness of such rate.

(d) The burden of proof in any proceeding under this section shall be on the complainant.

TITLE III—RAILROAD COST DETERMINATIONS

【Omitted—amendatory.】

TITLE IV—RAILROAD MODERNIZATION ASSISTANCE

【Omitted—amendatory.】

TITLE V—CONRAIL TITLE V LABOR PROTECTION

【Omitted—amendatory or obsolete.】

TITLE VI—EXPEDITED SUPPLEMENTAL TRANSACTION PROPOSALS

【Omitted—amendatory.】

TITLE VII—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

ROCK ISLAND AND MILWAUKEE RAILROADS AMENDMENTS

SEC. 701. 【Omitted—amendatory.】

LOAN GUARANTEES

SEC. 702. (a) To promote competition in the transportation of coal, the Secretary of Transportation shall, no later than 75 days after the date of the issuance of the final environmental impact statement with respect to the loan application, take final action on any application for loan guarantees, under section 511 of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, to be used in connection with joint ownership, construction, or rehabilitation of any facilities (including support facilities) for a second rail carrier to serve the Powder River Coal Region in Montana and Wyoming.

(b)(1) The Secretary of Transportation shall review the proposed Chicago and North Western connector line route and shall not approve any route which requires the use of any agricultural land unless (A) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (B) the proposed route construction plan requires all possible planning to minimize harm to such agricultural land resulting from such use. The Secretary of Transportation may not otherwise disapprove a proposed route for the Chicago and North Western line under the authority of this subsection. This review of a proposed route shall be conducted within 90 days after the final action specified in subsection (a) of this section.

(2)(A) The Secretary shall review the use of any agricultural land used in any route for newly constructed line and shall require, to the maximum extent prudent and feasible, that such railroad provide a private grade crossing for the convenience of each landowner whose agricultural holdings are divided by such newly constructed line when the Secretary finds that such division of property will cause a substantial disruption to the agricultural use of such land. The owners of such property shall file a request for such grade crossing with the Secretary within 180 days of the final determination of the route. The finding of the Secretary under this subsection shall be final.

(B) The Secretary shall render a decision on each request for grade crossing under this paragraph within 180 days of its receipt. Such review shall not require the delay of construction of new line under subsection (a) of this section.

(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the actions of the Secretary of Transportation taken pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall not be subject to judicial review except as provided in this section.

(2) A claim alleging the invalidity of this section may be brought no later than the 60th day following the date a final action is taken pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this section.

(3) A claim challenging an action of the Secretary of Transportation under subsection (a) or (b) of this section may be brought only on the grounds that such action will deny rights under the Constitution of the United States, is arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion, exceeds statutory jurisdiction, authority, or limitations, or is short of statutory right. Such a claim may be brought not later than the 60th day following the date of such action.

(4) A claim under paragraph (2) or (3) shall be barred unless prior to the expiration of such time limits, a complaint is filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia acting as a special court. Such court shall have exclusive jurisdiction to determine such proceeding in accordance with the procedures hereinafter provided, and no other court of the United States, of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, or of the District of Columbia, shall have jurisdiction of any such claim in any proceeding instituted prior to or on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) Any such proceeding shall be assigned for hearing and completed at the earliest possible date, and to the greatest extent practical shall take precedence over all other matters pending on the docket of the court at that time, and shall be expedited in every way by such court, and such court shall render its decision relative to any claim within 90 days from the date such claim is brought unless such court determines that a longer period is required to satisfy requirements of the Constitution of the United States.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall take the final action described in subsection (a) of this section without regard to the consent, or lack thereof, of any Committee of the Congress.

CONRAIL STUDIES AND EMERGENCY FUNDING

SEC. 703. (a) For purposes of this section, the term—

(1) “Association” means the United States Railway Association;

(2) “Commission” means the Interstate Commerce Commission;

(3) “Corporation” means the Consolidated Rail Corporation;

(4) “rail properties” means assets or rights owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by the Corporation which are used or useful in rail transportation service;

(5) “region” has the meaning given such term in section 101(15) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973; and

(6) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

(b)(1) No later than April 1, 1980, the Association and the Corporation shall each submit a report to the Congress analyzing the

impact, upon the Corporation, rail service in the region, railroad employees, the economy of the region, and other rail carriers in the region and elsewhere, and the Federal budget, of—

- (A) no further Federal funding for the Corporation;
- (B) continued Federal funding of the rail system of the Corporation as it is presently structured; and
- (C) future Federal funding of the Corporation to the extent necessary to preserve rail service in the region which can be self-supporting, without undue interim disruption of operations which will be maintained.

(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall contain a description, under each of the Federal funding alternatives set forth in subsection (a) of this section, of the lines of the Corporation which would be maintained, the lines of the Corporation which would be abandoned, and the lines which would be transferred.

(3) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall also include specific recommendations with respect to—

- (A) future projected funding requirements of the Corporation;
- (B) future structure and activities of the Corporation in the region;
- (C) any legislative action needed with respect to the matters described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph; and
- (D) any other matters which the Association or the Corporation considers appropriate.

The specific recommendations submitted under this paragraph shall set forth alternatives for the Congress to consider in the event it determines that modification of such recommendations is appropriate.

(4) In developing recommendations in accordance with this subsection, the Association and the Corporation shall identify measures designed to ensure a financially self-sustaining rail system in the region. The recommendations shall be based on analyses of rail properties which might be proposed for abandonment or transfer to another railroad or qualified person and proposed operating efficiencies which could improve the Corporation's revenue-to-cost ratio.

(5) In developing recommendations under this subsection, the Association and the Corporation shall each analyze and consider—

- (A) projections of the Corporation's future traffic, revenues, operating costs, and capital requirements;
- (B) rail properties which might be proposed for abandonment or transfer to another railroad or qualified person, taking into account the potential impact of changes in the regulatory environment;
- (C) the impact on communities served by lines proposed for abandonment or transfer;
- (D) proposed operating efficiencies which could improve the Corporation's revenue-to-cost ratio;
- (E) the impact on the Corporation of proposed mergers by connecting or competing railroads;

(F) employee motivation and labor productivity programs and a projection of labor protection costs which could result from the recommendations;

(G) the future capital structure of the Corporation; and

(H) any other factors identified by the Association as relevant to the recommendations required to be developed and submitted pursuant to this section.

(6)(A) The Association and the Corporation shall, on the date of submission of their recommendations to the Congress under this subsection, transmit copies of such recommendations to the Secretary, the Commission, and the Governor of each State that could be affected by such recommendations. Upon request, the Association and the Corporation shall furnish a copy of their recommendations to any interested person.

(B) As soon as practicable after submission of their recommendations to the Congress, the Association and the Corporation shall publish in the Federal Register a summary of such recommendations and invite interested parties to comment on such recommendations.

(7) The Commission shall, no later than May 1, 1981, submit to the Congress its comments on the reports of the Association, the Secretary, and the Corporation under this subsection.

(8) Not later than April 1, 1981, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress his recommendations with respect to the future structure and operations of the Corporation. Not later than May 1, 1981, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress his comments and recommendations with respect to the reports of the Association and the Corporation under this subsection, and shall make any changes in his recommendations that he determines are necessary.

(9) The antitrust laws, as defined in section 601(a)(3) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 791(a)(3)), shall not apply to any action taken by the Association or the Secretary prior to May 1, 1981, in accordance with and under the authority of the provisions of this subsection.

(c) The Corporation shall, no later than March 15, 1981, submit to the Congress an analysis of the effects upon the Corporation and its employees of alternative changes in labor agreements and related operational changes. Such report shall include an analysis of any Federal funding that will be required.

(d) The Corporation shall, no later than January 15, 1981, submit to the Association its projections of the benefits to the Corporation of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, its projections of changes needed in the structure of the rail system of the Corporation including properties which may be abandoned or transferred, and other projections of potential savings or increased revenues to the Corporation.

(e) Section 216(b) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 726(b)), as amended by this Act, is further amended by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

“(4) Purchases of up to \$329,000,000 of a series A preferred stock shall be made by the Association, subject to the availability of appropriations, as required and requested by the Corporation, if the Finance Committee makes an affirmative finding that the Corporation has taken appropriate action to eliminate losses on light

density lines and other lines which are unprofitable. Such action shall include the imposition of surcharges on such lines, the abandonment of such lines, and the transfer of such lines.”.

(f)(1) Section 216(a) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 726(a)) is amended by striking out “\$2,300,000,000” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$2,629,000,000”.

(2) Section 216(g) of such Act (45 U.S.C. 726(g)) is amended by striking out “\$3,300,000,000” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$3,629,000,000”.

(3) Section 210(e) of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 (45 U.S.C. 720(e)) is amended by inserting immediately after “section” in the first sentence thereof the following: “or under subsection (a) of section 306 of this Act”.

USRA AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 704. [Omitted—amendatory.]

FEEDER LINE REHABILITATION STUDY

SEC. 705. (a) The Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of the Treasury shall jointly submit to the Congress, within 9 months of the effective date of this Act, a comprehensive report on the anticipated effect (including the loss of revenue to the Federal Treasury) of amending section 103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to provide an exemption from taxation for obligations incurred in connection with the rehabilitation of railroad feeder lines. Such report shall also include such criteria as may be necessary to prevent the abuse of such special tax status.

(b) For purposes of this section, railroad feeder line rehabilitation includes the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or erection of any feeder line roadbed, track, trestle, depot, switching, and signaling equipment, or any other rail equipment (other than rolling stock).

EFFECT ON PENDING MATTERS

SEC. 706. In the case of any proposal docketed with a rate bureau prior to the effective date of this Act which is or becomes the subject of an application or proceeding before the Interstate Commerce Commission, such application or proceeding shall be determined as if this Act had not been enacted, and the antitrust immunity provided in section 10706(b) of title 49, United States Code, resulting from approval of such agreement shall continue in effect.

CONSTRUCTION OF AMENDMENTS

SEC. 707. With respect to the relationship between water carriers and rail carriers, none of the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to make lawful (1) any competitive practice that is unfair, destructive, predatory, or otherwise undermines competition and that was unlawful on the effective date of this Act, or (2) any other competitive practice that is unfair, destructive, predatory, or otherwise undermines competition.

SURPLUS PROPERTY

SEC. 708. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Consolidated Rail Corporation shall be considered a Federal agency for the sole purpose of Department of the Army Regulations 735-5, paragraph 1-16. Such Corporation may enter into a contract under the authority granted by this section only when it determines that the safety of the public so requires.

STUDY OF ALASKA RAILROAD RATES

SEC. 709. Within 6 months after the effective date of this Act, the Interstate Commerce Commission shall commence and complete a study to determine whether the rates charged by the Alaska Railroad pursuant to ICC-ARR Freight Tariffs 4108 and 4109 (as supplemented by supplements 1-4) would, if such rates had been entered into after the effective date of this Act, have constituted a violation of section 10701a(c)(1) of title 49, United States Code, as amended by this Act. To the extent feasible, such study shall be coordinated with the study by the State of Alaska in progress on the effective date of this Act.

EFFECTIVE DATES

SEC. 710. (a) Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 1980.

(b) Section 206 of this Act shall take effect on January 1, 1981.

(c) Section 218(b) of this Act shall take effect on October 1, 1983.

(d) Section 701 of this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

【11 U.S.C. 1170 nt】