

arrangements with a particular shipper will collect charges from the shipper and compensate the carriers that actually perform the services. The JVC will facilitate such compensation, acting as a clearinghouse and record keeper.

On January 7, 1999, Schneider National Bulk Carriers, Inc. (Schneider) filed a letter reply in opposition to the agreement, urging us to set the matter for hearing. Schneider asserts that the agreement is too vague; that it would unduly concentrate the market; that it would allow the participants to function as a de facto rate bureau; that it would permit improper "signals" of price movements; that uniform equipment costs could improperly influence carrier rates; and that the agreement would improperly allow division of the market. Interested persons may obtain a copy of Schneider's letter reply by contacting counsel for Schneider, Mr. Stephen M. Ferris, Esq., who may be reached at (920) 592-3896.

On January 15, 1999, Liquid Transport Corporation (LTC) filed a petition urging us to reject the agreement or to request comments from the public. LTC asserts that the proposal, which it concludes is not a pooling agreement but is instead a "Return Loads Bureau" and equipment cleaning service, is of major transportation importance because it will adversely affect the ability of other carriers to compete for this traffic; that the proposal will restrain competition and effectively constitute collective ratemaking; and that any benefits it may produce will not justify the harm it will cause. Interested persons may obtain a copy of LTC's petition by contacting counsel for LTC, Mr. Terry G. Fewell, Esq., who may be reached at (317) 637-1777.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14302(c)(2), the Board must determine whether the proposed pool is of major transportation importance and whether there is a substantial likelihood that the agreement will unduly restrain competition. If we determine that neither of these two factors exists, we are required to approve the agreement without a hearing. Before we attempt to make those determinations, we will seek public comments on the application and on the issues raised by Schneider and LTC.

So that we may issue a final decision on the application after the comments are analyzed, commenters should also address whether, even if the agreement is of major transportation importance or there is a substantial likelihood that the agreement will unduly restrain competition, the agreement should nevertheless be approved under 49

U.S.C. 14302(c)(3) because it would foster better service to the public or operational economies.

Because the applicant carriers bear the burden of proof, we will allow them to respond to the public comments.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14302(c)(3), we are required to suspend operation of the proposed agreement pending a final decision, and we hereby do so.

Board decisions and notices are available at our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

This notice and order will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. A hearing on the pooling application is commenced as described in this notice.
2. Effective on the date of publication, the operation of the proposed pooling agreement is suspended pending completion of this hearing and issuance of a final decision.
3. A copy of this notice will be served on the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20530.

Decided: January 25, 1999.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Clyburn.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-2224 Filed 1-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 290 (Sub-No. 4)]

Railroad Cost Recovery Procedures—Productivity Adjustment

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board, Transportation.

ACTION: Proposed adoption of a Railroad Cost Recovery Procedures productivity adjustment.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board proposes to adopt 1.057 (5.7%) as the measure of average growth in railroad productivity for the 1993-1997 (5-year) period. The current value of 9.7% was developed for the 1992 to 1996 period.

DATES: Comments are due by February 16, 1999.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The proposed productivity adjustment is effective February 28, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send comments (an original and 10 copies) referring to STB Ex Parte

No. 290 (Sub-No. 4) to: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. Parties should submit all pleading and attachments on a 3.5-inch diskette in WordPerfect 6.0 or 6.1 compatible format.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: H. Jeff Warren, (202) 565-1549. TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC NEWS & DATA, INC., Suite 210, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001, telephone (202) 289-4357. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 565-1695.]

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or energy conservation.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), we conclude that our action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Decided: January 22, 1999.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Clyburn.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-2225 Filed 1-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations: "Collecting Impressionism"

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978 (43 FR 13359, March 29, 1978), and Delegation Order No. 85-5 of June 27, 1985 (50 FR 27393, July 2, 1985). I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibit, "Collecting Impressionism," imported from abroad for the temporary exhibition without profit within the United States, are of cultural significance. These objects are imported pursuant to loan agreements with foreign lenders. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the exhibit objects at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia from February 27 through May 16, 1999, at the Seattle Art Museum in Seattle, Washington from

June 12 through August 29, 1999, and at the Denver Art Museum in Denver, Colorado from September 25 through December 12, 1999, is in the national interest. Public Notice of these Determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For a copy of the list of exhibit objects or for further information contact Lorie Nierenberg, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, 202/619-6084, and the address is Room 700, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: January 22, 1999.

[FR Doc. 99-2152 Filed 1-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0047]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed by the agency when a purchaser assumes a veteran's home in release of liability cases.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before March 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0047" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44

U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Financial Statement, VA Form 26-6807.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0047.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: This form provides information needed by the agency when a purchaser assumes a veteran's home in release of liability cases.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 30,000 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent: 45 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Generally one time.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 40,000.

Dated: December 2, 1998.

By direction of the Secretary.

Donald L. Neilson,

Director, Information Management Service.

[FR Doc. 99-2119 Filed 1-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0320]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an

opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed to allow veterans to gain occupancy of property even though exterior improvements must be postponed because of bad weather.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before March 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0320" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Escrow Agreement for Postponed Exterior Onsite Improvements, VA Form 26-1849.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0320.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: The data collected is used to allow a veteran to gain occupancy of a property when specified exterior onsite