

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chi D. Tran, Program Administrator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202-632-6471; email: section2459@state.gov). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PA, 2200 C Street NW (SA-5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522-0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), E.O. 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.*; 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, and Delegation of Authority No. 236-3 of August 28, 2000.

Matthew R. Lussenhop,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2021-24536 Filed 11-9-21; 8:45 am]

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. AB 979 (Sub-No. 3X)]

Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc.— Abandonment Exemption—in Hartford County, Conn.

Connecticut Southern Railroad, Inc. (CSO), has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—*Exemption Abandonments* to abandon a rail line between approximately milepost 8.33 (Station 5730+04) and milepost 9.40 (Station 5673+42) in Hartford County, Conn. (the Line). There are no stations on the Line. The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 06042.

CSO has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the Line since approximately July 2016; (2) because the Line is not a “through line,” there is no overhead traffic that would need to be rerouted; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the Line (or by state or local government on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the Line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or has been decided in favor of a complainant within the two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7(b) and 1105.8(c) (notice of environmental and historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publications), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to government agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under

*Oregon Short Line Railroad—
Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch
Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham &
Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 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,¹ this exemption will be effective on December 10, 2021, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2), and interim trail use/rail banking request under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by November 22, 2021.³ Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by November 30, 2021.

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. AB 979 (Sub-No. 3X), should be filed with the Surface Transportation Board via e-filing on the Board’s website. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on CSO’s representative, Eric M. Hocky, Clark Hill PLC, Two Commerce Square, 2001 Market Street, Suite 2620, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

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

CSO has filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the potential effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. OEA will issue a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) by November 15, 2021. The Draft EA will be available to interested persons on the Board’s website, by writing to OEA, or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0294. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Comments on environmental or historic preservation matters must be

¹ Persons interested in submitting an OFA must first file a formal expression of intent to file an offer, indicating the type of financial assistance they wish to provide (*i.e.*, subsidy or purchase) and demonstrating that they are preliminarily financially responsible. See 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2)(i).

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board’s Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption’s effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Serv. 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.

³ Filing fees for OFAs and trail use requests can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25) and (27), respectively.

filed within 15 days after the Draft 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.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), CSO shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the Line. If consummation has not been effected by CSO’s filing of a notice of consummation by November 10, 2022, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: November 5, 2021.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Eden Besera,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2021-24568 Filed 11-9-21; 8:45 am]

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36550]

Missouri Eastern Railroad, LLC— Acquisition and Change of Operator Exemption—V and S Railway, LLC, and Central Midland Railway Company

Missouri Eastern Railroad, LLC (MER), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire: (1) From V and S Railway, LLC (V&S), an approximately 42.89-mile rail line between milepost 19.0 near Vigus, Mo., and milepost 61.89 near Union, Mo., (the Line); and (2) incidental overhead trackage rights over a rail line owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company between milepost 19.0 near Vigus and milepost 10.3 at Rock Island Junction, Mo. (the TR Segment).

According to the verified notice, MER and V&S are in the process of finalizing the terms of an asset purchase agreement (the Agreement), pursuant to which MER will assume ownership of the Line. The verified notice indicates that Central Midland Railway Company (Central Midland) currently operates the Line (and also leases the TR Segment), and that, in light of MER’s purchase of the Line, Central Midland has agreed that MER will replace it as the common carrier operator on the Line, thus effectuating a change of operator. MER states that it plans to replace Central Midland as the common carrier operator on the Line on or after January 1, 2022,

and would commence operations on the TR Segment at that same time.

MER certifies that the transaction does not involve any provision, restriction, or agreement that would limit future interchange with a third-party connecting carrier. MER further certifies that its projected annual revenues resulting from the transaction will not exceed \$5 million and will not result in MER's becoming a Class I or Class II rail carrier. Under 49 CFR 1150.32(b), a change in operator requires that notice be given to shippers. MER has certified that notice of the proposed transaction has been provided to shippers on the Line.

The earliest this transaction may be consummated is November 24, 2021. MER states that it expects to acquire the Line on or after that date and to commence operations over the Line and its incidental trackage rights over the TR Segment on or after January 1, 2022.

If the verified 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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than November 17, 2021 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36550, should be filed with the Surface Transportation Board via e-filing on the Board's website. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on MER's representative, Robert A. Wimbish, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606.

According to MER, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b)(1).

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: November 5, 2021.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2021-24598 Filed 11-9-21; 8:45 am]

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36551]

OPSEU Pension Plan Trust Fund, Jaguar Transport Holdings, LLC, and Jaguar Rail Holdings, LLC—Continuance in Control Exemption—Missouri Eastern Railroad, LLC

OPSEU Pension Plan Trust Fund (OPTrust), Jaguar Transport Holdings, LLC (JTH), and Jaguar Rail Holdings, LLC (JRH, and collectively with OPTrust and JTH, Jaguar), all noncarriers, have filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2) to continue in control of Missouri Eastern Railroad, LLC (MER), a noncarrier established by Jaguar to acquire a railroad line (and related, incidental overhead trackage rights) in Missouri, upon MER's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Missouri Eastern Railroad—Acquisition & Change of Operator Exemption—V and S Railway*, Docket No. FD 36550. In that proceeding, MER has filed a verified notice of exemption pursuant to 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire: (1) From V and S Railway, LLC, an approximately 42.89-mile rail line between milepost 19.0 near Vigus, Mo., and milepost 61.89 near Union, Mo.; and (2) incidental overhead trackage rights over a rail line owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company between milepost 19.0 near Vigus and milepost 10.3 at Rock Island Junction, Mo.

Jaguar states that it will continue in control of MER upon MER's becoming a Class III rail carrier. According to the verified notice, OPTrust indirectly controls JTH, which currently controls, directly: Three Class III railroads directly controlled by JRH—Southwestern Railroad, Inc., Texas & Eastern Railroad, LLC, and Wyoming and Colorado Railroad, Inc., (WYCO) (which also does business under the name Oregon Eastern Railroad); two Class III railroads indirectly controlled by JRH through WYCO—Cimarron Valley Railroad, L.C., and Washington Eastern Railroad, LLC; and one Class III railroad indirectly controlled by JTH through its subsidiary Jaguar Transport, LLC—West Memphis Base Railroad, L.L.C. The lines of the rail carriers controlled by JTH and JRH are located in Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington.

Jaguar states that: (1) The Line does not connect with any other rail lines operated by carriers controlled by JTH or JRH and none of those rail lines

connect with each other; (2) the continuance in control transaction is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect the Line with any other rail lines in the JTH or JRH corporate families or that would connect any of those rail lines with each other; and (3) the transaction does not involve a Class I rail carrier. Therefore, the proposed transaction is exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. See 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2).

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. However, 49 U.S.C. 11326(c) does not provide for labor protection for transactions under 49 U.S.C. 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

The earliest this transaction may be consummated is November 24, 2021, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed). If the verified 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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions to stay must be filed no later than November 17, 2021.

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36551, should be filed with the Surface Transportation Board via e-filing on the Board's website. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Jaguar's representative, Robert A. Wimbish, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606.

According to Jaguar, this action is excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b)(1).

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: November 5, 2021.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Brendetta Jones,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2021-24583 Filed 11-9-21; 8:45 am]

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