

include improving efficiency on passenger rail routes; reducing disputes between passenger rail carriers and freight rail hosts regarding the use of freight rail carrier-owned facilities and infrastructure for passenger service, including passenger on-time performance issues; and improving regulatory processes related to intercity passenger rail to the benefit of the public, the communities served by passenger rail, and the environment. The PRAC operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 10).

When all vacancies are filled, the PRAC consists of at least 18 voting members<sup>1</sup> who comprise a balanced representation of individuals knowledgeable regarding passenger rail transportation, freight rail transportation, commuter rail operations, and transportation public policy. Members are selected by the Chair of the Board with the concurrence of a majority of the Board. The Chair of the Board may invite representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation to serve on the PRAC in advisory capacities as *ex officio* (non-voting) members. The members of the Board also serve as *ex officio* members of the Committee. The PRAC meets at least twice a year, and meetings are open to the public, consistent with the Government in the Sunshine Act, Public Law 94-409 (1976).

A vacancy currently exists on the PRAC for a representative from a state that provides funding for intercity passenger rail. The Board is therefore soliciting nominations from the public for candidates to fill this vacancy. Pursuant to the PRAC charter, this representative cannot be from the same state as any of the representatives of the commuter rail operators, or the representative from a state in which the intercity passenger rail stations are served only by long-distance trains.<sup>2</sup> See PRAC Charter art. 12.a.ii.4. The new member will serve the remainder of the representative's current 3-year term, which ends in March 2027. Members may serve an additional term with approval from the Chair of the Board, without needing to be renominated for that additional term.<sup>3</sup> Members of the

PRAC are appointed to serve in a representative capacity.

According to revised guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget, it is permissible for federally registered lobbyists to serve on advisory committees, such as the PRAC, as long as they do so in a representative capacity, rather than an individual capacity. See *Revised Guidance on Appointment of Lobbyists to Fed. Advisory Comms., Bds., & Comm'ns*, 79 FR 47482 (Aug. 13, 2014). No honoraria, salaries, travel or per diem are available to members of the PRAC; however, reimbursement for travel expenses may be sought from the Board in cases of hardship.

Nominations for candidates to fill the current vacancy should be submitted in letter form and should include: (1) the name, position, and business contact information (including email address and phone number) of the candidate; (2) a summary of the candidate's experience and qualifications for the position; (3) a representation that the candidate is willing to serve as a member of the PRAC; and, (4) a statement that the candidate agrees to serve in a representative capacity. Candidates may nominate themselves. Nominations for candidates for the current vacancy on the PRAC should be filed with the Board by February 27, 2025. Please note that submissions will be posted publicly on the Board's website under Docket No. EP 774 (Sub-No. 1).

*Authority:* 49 U.S.C. 1321; 49 U.S.C. 24101.

Decided: January 28, 2025.

By the Board, Mai T. Dinh, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Aretha Laws-Byrum,**  
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2025-02049 Filed 1-30-25; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-01-P**

## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**[Docket No. AB 1343X]**

### **Saratoga Railroad, LLC— Abandonment Exemption—in Carbon County, Wyo.**

Saratoga Railroad, LLC (Saratoga), has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152, subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon an approximately 23.71-mile rail line between milepost 0.57, near Walcott, Wyo., and milepost 24.28, at Saratoga, Wyo., in Carbon County, Wyo. (the

reappointed, they may serve two additional terms before being required to be renominated.

Line).<sup>1</sup> The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 82331 and 82335.

Saratoga has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years; (2) any overhead traffic on the Line can be rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the Line (or by a state or local government on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the Line is pending with either the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of a complainant within the past two years; 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 publication), 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,<sup>2</sup> this exemption will be effective on March 2, 2025, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do

<sup>1</sup> In 2006, the Board authorized Wyoming and Colorado Railroad Company, Inc. (WYCO), the Line's then-owner, to abandon it. *Wyo. & Colo. R.R.—Aban. Exemption—in Carbon Cnty., Wyo.*, AB 307 (Sub-No. 6X) (STB served May 1, 2006). WYCO, however, did not file a notice of consummation by the May 2007 deadline, and, as a result, its abandonment authority automatically expired at that time. In 2017, Saratoga (which at that time was under common control with WYCO) acquired the Line from WYCO. See *Durbano—Corp. Fam. Transaction*, FD 36091 (STB served Feb. 2, 2017). On April 1, 2024, Saratoga and its parent company, Western Group Holding Company, Inc., (which by that time were no longer affiliated with WYCO) filed a petition in WYCO's 2006 abandonment docket asking the Board to waive the requirement for WYCO to have filed a consummation notice or extension request by the May 2007 deadline, in order to permit Saratoga to consummate the 2006 abandonment authority itself. That request was denied, and Saratoga was advised that if it wished to abandon the Line, it must file for abandonment authority in a new docket. *Wyo. & Colo. R.R.—Aban. Exemption—in Carbon Cnty., Wyo.*, AB 307 (Sub-No. 6X), slip op. at 3 (STB served Aug. 13, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>1</sup> There are currently 20 voting members serving on the PRAC, plus one vacancy.

<sup>2</sup> The current commuter rail representatives are from Illinois and California and the current representative from a state in which the intercity passenger rail stations are served only by long-distance trains is from Colorado.

<sup>3</sup> Under the PRAC Charter, any member of the PRAC who has served for two consecutive terms will be required to be renominated for membership and appointed by the Chair of the Board should they wish to serve for additional terms. If

not involve environmental issues,<sup>3</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2), and interim trail use/railbanking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by February 10, 2025.<sup>4</sup> Petitions to reopen and requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed February 20, 2025.

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. AB 1343X, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing on the Board's website or in writing addressed to 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Saratoga's representative, William A. Mullins, Mullins Law Group PLLC, 2001 L St. NW, Suite 720, Washington, DC 20036.

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

Saratoga 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 February 7, 2025. 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. If you require an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please call (202) 245-0245. Comments on environmental or historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the Draft EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/railbanking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), Saratoga 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 Saratoga's filing of a notice of consummation by January 31, 2026, 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](http://www.stb.gov).

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Filing fees for OFAs and trail use requests can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25) and (27), respectively.

Decided: January 28, 2025.

By the Board, Mai T. Dinh, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Jeffrey Herzig,**  
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2025-02072 Filed 1-30-25; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD-2025-0002]

#### Coastwise-Qualified Launch Barges Notification

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration (MARAD), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** To maximize the use of coastwise-qualified vessels, in January of each calendar year, MARAD requests owners and operators of coastwise-qualified launch barges or other interested parties to notify the Agency of their interest in, and provide certain information relating to, the transportation, installation, or launching of platform jackets. MARAD publishes the notifications as a resource to companies contemplating these operations on the outer continental shelf. The notifications should include information set forth in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before March 3, 2025.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD-2025-0002 by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search "MARAD-2025-0002" and follow the instructions for submitting comments on the electronic docket site.
- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

**Note:** All submissions must include the agency name and docket number for this notice. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> including any personal information provided.

*Docket:* For access to the docket to read comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search using "MARAD-2025-0002."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Patricia Hagerty, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W23-461, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-0903. Email: [Cargo.MARAD@dot.gov](mailto:Cargo.MARAD@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 55108, the Secretary of Transportation has the authority to adopt procedures that timely provide information that would maximize the use of coastwise-qualified vessels for the transportation of platform jackets between U.S. coastwise points and the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. This authority has been delegated to MARAD. The regulation promulgated under the authority of 46 U.S.C. 55108, 46 CFR 389.3(a), requires that MARAD publish a notice in the **Federal Register** requesting notification from owners, operators, or potential operators of coastwise-qualified launch barges, or other interested parties, of: (1) their interest in participating in the transportation and, if needed, the launching or installation of offshore platform jackets; (2) the contact information for their company; and, (3) the specifications of any currently owned or operated coastwise-qualified launch barges or plans to construct such a vessel. The notification should indicate that the vessel's certificate of documentation has a coastwise endorsement. The information provided in the notifications will be published at <http://MARAD.regulations.gov>.

#### Privacy Act

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), MARAD solicits comments from owners and operators of coastwise-qualified launch barges to compile a list of vessels that could potentially be available to transport, and if necessary, launch or install platform jackets. All timely comments will be considered; however, to facilitate comment tracking, commenters should provide their name or the name of their organization. If comments contain proprietary or confidential information, commenters may contact the Agency for alternate submission instructions. The electronic form of all comments received into MARAD dockets may be searched by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). For information on DOT's compliance with the Privacy Act, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

(Authority: 46 U.S.C. 55108, 49 CFR 1.93(a), 46 CFR 389.)