

continuance in control is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect the rail lines being acquired by MMT with any railroad in the Watco corporate family; and (3) neither MMT nor any of the carriers controlled by Watco are Class I rail carriers. Therefore, the transaction is exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. See 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2). The purpose of the transaction is to reduce overhead expenses, coordinate billing, maintenance, mechanical and personnel policies and practices of its rail carrier subsidiaries and thereby improve the overall efficiency of rail service provided by the ten railroads.

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. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Accordingly, the Board may not impose labor protective conditions here, because all of the carriers involved are Class III carriers.

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 transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34635, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Of Counsel, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: January 12, 2005.

By the Board,

David M. Konschnik,

Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 05-1005 Filed 1-18-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34634]

Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.— Acquisition Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc. (MMT), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire by purchase and lease from The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) rail lines in the State of Montana. The rail line being purchased is between milepost 1249.35, near Stryker, and milepost 1272.22, near Eureka, in Lincoln County, MT, a distance of approximately 22.87 miles. The rail line being leased is between milepost 1211.86, near Columbia Falls, and milepost 1227.58, near Kalispell, in Flathead County, MT, a distance of approximately 15.72 miles.¹ MMT will operate both lines.

The transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 34635, *Watco Companies, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.*, wherein Watco Companies, Inc., has concurrently filed a verified notice of exemption to continue in control of MMT upon MMT's becoming a Class III rail carrier. MMT certifies that its projected revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in MMT's becoming a Class II or Class I rail carrier, and further certifies that its projected annual revenues will not exceed \$5 million.

The transaction was expected to be consummated on or shortly after December 28, 2004.

If the 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 transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34634, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Of Counsel, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

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¹ BNSF is retaining the right to use the wye tracks at Columbia Falls.

Decided: January 12, 2005.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 05-1006 Filed 1-18-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34610]

Stillwater Central Railroad, Inc.—Lease Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

The Stillwater Central Railroad, Inc. (SLWC), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 *et seq.* to acquire by lease and to operate approximately 12.6 miles of rail line owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), between: (1) Milepost 549.01 at Wheatland, OK, and milepost 542.0 at Oklahoma City, OK, including the Dayton Lead in Wheatland; (2) milepost 540.0 west of the BNSF North Yard, in Oklahoma City, and milepost 536.4 in Oklahoma City, including the North Yard; and (3) milepost 0.0 on the Packing Town Lead, and a point 500 feet west of the wye connecting the Packing Town Lead with BNSF's Red Rock Subdivision, in Oklahoma City.¹ SLWC will also acquire approximately 5.5 miles of incidental overhead trackage rights between: (1) milepost 384.6 and milepost 390.0, on the Red Rock Subdivision, in Oklahoma City; and (2) a point 500 feet west of the wye connecting the Packing Town Lead and the point of connection between the Packing Town Lead and BNSF's Red Rock Subdivision.

SLWC certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier. But, because SLWC's projected annual revenues will exceed \$5 million, SLWC has certified to the Board on October 29, 2004, that it sent the required notice of the transaction to the national offices of all labor unions representing employees on the affected lines and posted a copy of the notice at the workplace of the employees on the affected lines on the same date. See 49 CFR 1150.42(e).

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or after December 28, 2004 (which is 60 days or more after SLWC's certification to the Board that it

¹ BNSF will retain overhead trackage rights over the leased rail lines.