

Issued on: January 28, 2008.

Nicole R. Nason,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 462X)]

BNSF Railway Company— Discontinuance of Trackage Rights Exemption—in Cook County, IL

On January 14, 2008, BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to discontinue overhead trackage rights over a 17.8-mile line of railroad owned by Illinois Central Railroad Company, between milepost 1.7 at Chicago, and milepost 19.5 at Harvey, in Cook County, IL.¹ The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 60426, 60605, 60609, 60615, 60616, 60620, 60621, 60643, and 60653.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by May 2, 2008.

Because this is a discontinuance proceeding and not an abandonment, trail use/rail banking and public use conditions are not appropriate. Similarly, no environmental or historic documentation is required under 49 CFR 1105.6(c)(2) and 1105.8(b).

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) for subsidy under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,300. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 462X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Karl Morell, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005. Replies to the petition are due on or before February 21, 2008.

¹ BNSF was granted authority to operate the line in *The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company—Trackage Rights Exemption—Illinois Central Railroad Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 33765 (STB served June 23, 1999).

Persons seeking further information concerning discontinuance procedures may contact the Board's Office of Congressional and Public Services at (202) 245-0230 or refer to the full abandonment and discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152.

Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 245-0305. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

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

Decided: January 23, 2008.

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

Anne K. Quinlan,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. E8-1652 Filed 1-31-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Increase in Mileage Reimbursement Rate and Deductible Amounts in the Beneficiary Travel Program

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice is to inform the public of the Secretary's decision to increase the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Beneficiary Travel program mileage reimbursement rate and deductible amounts under 38 U.S.C. 111 for travel of eligible beneficiaries in connection with VA health care and for other purposes. Effective February 1, 2008, the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate is increased from 11 cents to 28.5 cents based upon mileage traveled to or from a Department facility or other place in connection with vocational rehabilitation, counseling required by the Secretary pursuant to 38 U.S.C. chapter 34, "Educational Assistance" or chapter 35, "Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance" or for the purpose of examination, treatment or care.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tony A. Guagliardo, Director, Business Policy, Chief Business Office (16), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, D.C. 20420, (202) 254-0406. (This is not a toll-free number)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 111,

"Payments or allowances for beneficiary travel" the Secretary has authority to establish rates for payment of mileage reimbursement for certain eligible beneficiaries. Funding for beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement comes directly from the annual health care appropriation and General Operating Expenses covers the chapter 34 and chapter 35 reimbursement. Funds expended for beneficiary travel decrease those available for direct medical care. Accordingly, due to the steady rise in patient workload and the associated increased demand for VA medical care resources, the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate has not been changed since 1978. The 2008 Appropriations Act provided funding in VA's health care appropriation to increase the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate to 28.5 cents per mile, which is the current reimbursement rate for Federal employees if a Government-owned vehicle is available. The Secretary has thus made the decision to increase VA's beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate to 28.5 cents per mile. In making this decision, the Secretary also reviewed and analyzed other factors including the increase in the cost of depreciation of vehicles, gasoline and oil, maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires, insurances and taxes; the availability of and time required for public transportation; and the other mileage allowances authorized for Federal employees.

Title 38 U.S.C. 111(c)(5) requires VA to adjust proportionately the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate deductibles for travel in relation to examination, treatment or care (currently \$3 one way; \$6 round trip, with a maximum of \$18 per calendar month) effective on the date of a beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate change. Therefore, based on the increase of the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate the deductible is adjusted proportionately to \$7.77 per one way trip; \$15.54 for a round trip; with a maximum deductible of \$46.62 per calendar month. These deductibles may be waived in accordance with 38 CFR 17.144(b) when their imposition would cause severe financial hardship.

Approved: January 24, 2008

James B. Peake,

Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. E8-1641 Filed 1-31-08; 8:45 am]

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