

Administration, 409 Third Street SW., Washington, DC 20416.

A. Joseph Shepard,

Associate Administrator for Office of Investment and Innovation.

[FR Doc. 2017-07789 Filed 4-17-17; 8:45 am]

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Administrator's Line of Succession Designation, No. 1-A, Revision 36

This document replaces and supersedes "Line of Succession Designation No. 1-A, Revision 35".

Line of Succession Designation No. 1-A, Revision 36:

Effective immediately, the Administrator's Line of Succession Designation is as follows:

(a) In the event of my inability to perform the functions and duties of my position, or my absence from the office, the Deputy Administrator will assume all functions and duties of the Administrator. In the event the Deputy Administrator and I are both unable to perform the functions and duties of the position or are absent from our offices, I designate the officials in listed order below, if they are eligible to act as Administrator under the provisions of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 (5 U.S.C. 3345-3349d), to serve as Acting Administrator with full authority to perform all acts which the Administrator is authorized to perform:

- (1) Chief of Staff;
- (2) General Counsel;
- (3) Chief Operating Officer;
- (4) Associate Administrator, Office of Disaster Assistance; and
- (5) Regional Administrator for Region 9.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of SBA Standard Operating Procedure 00 01 2, "absence from the office," as used in reference to myself in paragraph (a) above, means the following:

(1) I am not present in the office and cannot be reasonably contacted by phone or other electronic means, and there is an immediate business necessity for the exercise of my authority; or

(2) I am not present in the office and, upon being contacted by phone or other electronic means, I determine that I cannot exercise my authority effectively without being physically present in the office.

(c) An individual serving in an acting capacity in any of the positions listed in subparagraphs (a)(1) through (5), unless designated as such by the Administrator, is not also included in this Line of Succession. Instead, the next non-acting incumbent in the Line

of Succession shall serve as Acting Administrator.

(d) This designation shall remain in full force and effect until revoked or superseded in writing by the Administrator, or by the Deputy Administrator when serving as Acting Administrator.

(e) Serving as Acting Administrator has no effect on the officials listed in subparagraphs (a)(1) through (5), above, with respect to their full-time position's authorities, duties and responsibilities (except that such official cannot both recommend and approve an action).

Dated: April 11, 2017.

Linda E. McMahon,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2017-07778 Filed 4-17-17; 8:45 am]

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

[Docket No: SSA-2017-0019]

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Request and Comment Request

The Social Security Administration (SSA) publishes a list of information collection packages requiring clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with Public Law 104-13, the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, effective October 1, 1995. This notice includes revisions of OMB-approved information collections.

SSA is soliciting comments on the accuracy of the agency's burden estimate; the need for the information; its practical utility; ways to enhance its quality, utility, and clarity; and ways to minimize burden on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Mail, email, or fax your comments and recommendations on the information collection(s) to the OMB Desk Officer and SSA Reports Clearance Officer at the following addresses or fax numbers.

(OMB), Office of Management and Budget, Attn: Desk Officer for SSA, Fax: 202-395-6974, Email address: OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov.

(SSA), Social Security Administration, OLCA, Attn: Reports Clearance Director, 3100 West High Rise, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235, Fax: 410-966-2830, Email address: OR.Reports.Clearance@ssa.gov. Or you may submit your comments online through www.regulations.gov, referencing Docket ID Number [SSA-2017-0019].

I. The information collections below are pending at SSA. SSA will submit them to OMB within 60 days from the date of this notice. To be sure we consider your comments, we must receive them no later than June 19, 2017. Individuals can obtain copies of the collection instruments by writing to the above email address.

1. Promoting Opportunity Demonstration—0960-NEW. Section 823 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 requires SSA to carry out the Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD) to test a new benefit offset formula for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries. Therefore, SSA is undertaking POD, a demonstration to evaluate the affect the new policy will have on SSDI beneficiaries and their families in several critical areas: (1) Employment, (2) benefits, (3) earnings, and (4) income (earnings plus benefits). Under current law, Social Security beneficiaries lose their SSDI benefit if they have earnings or work activity above the threshold of Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA). The POD evaluation will draw on previous lessons from related work incentive experiences, especially SSA's Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND), 0960-0785, which tested a different offset formula. POD tests a different policy than BOND in two important ways: (1) A lower threshold at which point the offset is applied—increasing the likelihood of reducing benefit expenditures relative to current law expenditures; and (2) A more immediate adjustment to the benefits—to increase the salience and clarity of the offset policy for beneficiaries. The POD will test a benefit offset that will reduce benefits by \$1 for every \$2 in participants' earnings above the POD threshold, gradually reducing benefits as earnings increase. The POD threshold will equal the greater of (1) an inflation-adjusted trial work period level (\$840 in 2017); or (2) the amount of the participant's itemized impairment-related work expenses up to SGA. The new rules we will test in POD also simplify work incentives and we intend them to promote employment and reduce dependency on benefits.

The design for POD will include implementation and evaluation activities designed to answer seven central research questions:

- What are the impacts of the two POD benefit designs on beneficiaries' earnings, SSDI benefits, and total earnings and benefit income?
- Is POD attractive to beneficiaries? Do they remain engaged over time?
- How were the POD offset policies implemented, and what operational,

systemic, or contextual factors facilitated or posed challenges to administering the offset?

- How successful were POD and SSA in making timely benefit adjustments, and what factors affected timeliness positively or negatively?
- How do the impacts of the POD offset policies vary with beneficiary characteristics?
- What are the costs and benefits of the POD benefit designs relative to current law, and what are the implications for the SSDI trust fund?
- What are the implications of the POD findings for national policy

proposals that would include a SSDI benefit offset?
 The public survey data collections have four components—a process analysis, a participation analysis, an impact analysis, and a cost-benefit analysis. The data collections are the primary source for data to measure the effects the benefit offset on SSDI beneficiaries' work efforts and earnings. Ultimately, these data will benefit researchers, policy analysts, policy makers, SSA, and the state vocational rehabilitation agencies in a wide range of program areas. There are four targeted outcomes for SSDI beneficiaries under POD: (1) Increased employment and earnings; (2)

decreased benefits payments; (3) increased total income; and (4) impacts on other related outcomes (for example, health status and quality of life).
 Additionally, four outcomes of interest for system changes include: (1) Reduction in overpayments; (2) enhanced program integrity; (3) stronger culture of self-sufficiency; and (4) improved SSDI trust fund balance. Respondents are SSDI beneficiaries, who will provide written consent before agreeing to participate in the study and before we randomly assign them to one of the study treatment groups.
Type of Request: Request for a new information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Number of responses	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
Informed Consent Form	16,500	1	16,500	15	4,125
Baseline Survey	16,500	1	16,500	20	5,500
12-Month Follow Up Survey	6,000	1	6,000	30	3,000
24-Month Follow Up Survey	12,000	1	12,000	30	6,000
Interviews with Site Staff	40	4	160	66	176
Onsite Audit of Sample of Case Files	8	2	16	20	5
Semi-Structured Interviews with Treatment Group Subjects	144	1	144	60	144
Monthly Earnings and Impairment-Related Expenses Reporting Form (paper)	1,820	12	21,840	10	3,640
Monthly Earnings and Impairment-Related Expenses Reporting Form (Internet)	780	12	9,360	5	780
End of Year Reporting Form (paper)	945	1	945	15	236
End of Year Reporting Form (Internet)	405	1	405	10	68
Totals	55,142	.....	83,870	.....	23,674

2. Statement Regarding Contributions—20 CFR 404.360–404.366 and 404.736—0960–0020. SSA uses the SSA–783 to collect information regarding a child's current sources of support when determining the child's entitlement to Social Security benefits. We request this information from adults acting on behalf of the child claimants

who can provide SSA with any sources of support or substantial contributions for the child. These adults inform the claims representative of these sources as part of the initial benefits process. If the individual capable of providing the information does not accompany the child claimant, we mail the SSA–783 to the individual for completion; or if the

person has access to a computer, we will refer them to SSA's Web site. The respondents are individuals providing information about a child's sources of support.
Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
SSA–783	30,000	1	17	8,500

3. Disability Report—Appeal—20 CFR 404.1512, 416.912, 404.916(c), 416.1416(c), 422.140, 404.1713, 416.1513, 404.1740(b)(4), 416.1540(b)(4), and 405 Subpart C—0960–0144. SSA requires disability applicants who wish to appeal an unfavorable disability determination to complete Form SSA–3441–BK; the associated Electronic Disability Collect System (EDCS) interview; or the Internet application, i3441. This allows claimants to disclose any changes to

their disability, or resources, which might influence SSA's unfavorable determination. We may use the information to: (1) Reconsider and review an initial disability determination; (2) review a continuing disability; and (3) evaluate a request for a hearing. This information assists the State Disability Determination Services (DDS) and administrative law judges (ALJ) in preparing for the appeals and hearings, and in issuing a determination or decision on an individual's

entitlement (initial or continuing) to disability benefits. In addition, the information we collect on the SSA–3441–BK, or related modalities, facilitates SSA's collection of medical information to support the applicant's request for reconsideration; request for benefits cessation appeal; and request for a hearing before an ALJ. Respondents are individuals who appeal denial, reduction, or cessation of Social Security disability benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

payments; individuals who wish to request a hearing before an ALJ; or their representatives.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
SSA-3441-BK	2,396	1	45	1,797
Electronic Disability Collect System (EDCS)	476,771	1	45	357,578
i3441 (Internet)	1,046,938	1	28	488,571
Totals	1,526,105	.....	.....	847,946

4. Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA—20 CFR 404.1512 and 416.912, 45 CFR 160 and 164—0960-0623. Sections 223(d)(5)(A) and 1614(a)(3)(H)(i) of the Social Security Act require claimants to provide medical and other evidence the Commissioner of Social Security may require to prove they are disabled. SSA must obtain sufficient evidence to make

eligibility determinations for Title II and Title XVI payments. Therefore, the applicant must authorize release of information from various sources to SSA. The applicants use Form SSA-827, or the Internet counterpart, i827, to provide consent for the release of medical records, education records, and other information related to their ability to perform tasks. Once the applicant

completes Form SSA-827, or the i827, SSA or the State DDS sends the form to the designated source(s) to obtain pertinent records. The respondents are applicants for Title II and Title XVI disability payments.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
i827 with electronic signature (eAuthorization)	4,189,270	1	9	628,391
SSA-827 with wet signature (paper version)	1,055,807	1	10	175,968
Totals	5,245,077	.....	.....	804,359

II. SSA submitted the information collections below to OMB for clearance. Your comments regarding these information collections would be most useful if OMB and SSA receive them 30 days from the date of this publication. To be sure we consider your comments, we must receive them no later than May 18, 2017. Individuals can obtain copies of the OMB clearance packages by writing to *OR.Reports.Clearance@ssa.gov*.

1. Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)—0960-NEW. Sponsored by SSA, the SED builds on the success of the intervention designed for the Mental Health Treatment Study (MHTS) previously funded by SSA. The MHTS provides integrated mental health and vocational services to disability beneficiaries with mental illness. The SED will offer these same services to individuals with mental illness to whom SSA denied Social Security disability benefits. SSA seeks to determine whether offering this evidence-based package of integrated vocational and mental health services to denied disability applicants fosters employment that leads to self-sufficiency, improved mental health and quality of life, and reduced demand for

disability benefits. The SED will use a randomized controlled trial to compare the outcomes of two treatment groups and a control group. Study participation spans 36 months beginning on the day following the date of randomization to one of the three study groups. The SED study population consists of individuals aged 18 to 50 who apply for disability benefits alleging a mental illness and the initial decision is a denial of benefits in the past 60 days. The SED will enroll up to 1,000 participants in each of the three study arms for a total of 3,000 participants: 40 participants in each of three study arms for the 20 urban sites equaling an *n* of 2,400 urban site participants, and 20 participants in each of three arms for the 10 rural sites equaling an *n* of 600 rural site participants. We randomly select and assign each enrolled participant to one of three study arms:

- *Full-Service Treatment (n=1,000).* The multi-component service model from the MHTS comprises the Full-Service Treatment. At its core are an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment specialist and behavioral health specialist providing IPS supported employment services integrated with behavioral health care.

Participants in the full-service treatment group will also receive the services of a Nurse Care Coordinator who coordinates Systematic Medication Management services, as well assistance with: Out-of-pocket expenses associated with prescription behavioral health medications; work-related expenses; and services and treatment not covered by the participant's health insurance.

- *Basic-Service Treatment (n=1,000).* The Basic-Service Treatment model leaves intact IPS supported employment integrated with behavioral health services as the centerpiece of the intervention arm. The Basic-Service Treatment is essentially the Full-Service model without the services of the Nurse Care Coordinator, Systematic Medication Management, and the funds associated with out-of-pocket expenses for prescription behavioral health medications.

- *Usual Services (n=1,000).* This study arm represents a control group against which the two treatment groups we can compare. Participants assigned to this group seek services as they normally would (or would not) in their community. However, at the time of randomization, each Usual Service participant will receive a

comprehensive manual describing mental health and vocational services in their locale, along with state and national resources.

This study will test the two treatment conditions against each other and against the control group on multiple outcomes of policy interest to SSA. The key outcomes of interest include: (1) Employment; (2) earnings; (3) income; (4) mental status; (5) quality of life; (6) health services utilization; and (7) SSA disability benefit receipt and amount. SSA is also interested in the study take up rate (participation), knowing who enrolls (and who does not), and fidelity to evidence-based treatments, among

other aspects of implementation. Data collection for the evaluation of the SED will consist of the following activities: Baseline in-person participant interviews; quarterly participant telephone interviews; receipt of SSA administrative record data; and collection of site-level program data. Evaluation team members will also conduct site visits involving: (1) Pre-visit environmental scans in order to understand the local context in which SED services are embedded; (2) independent fidelity assessments in conjunction with those carried out by state Mental Health/Vocational Rehabilitation staff; (3) key informant

interviews with the IPS specialist, the nurse care coordinator, the case manager, and facility director; (4) focus groups with participants in the Full-Service and Basic-Service Treatment groups; and (5) ethnographic data collection consisting of observations in the natural environment and person-centered interviews with participants and non-participants. The respondents are study participants and non-participants, family members, IPS specialists, nurse care coordinators, case managers, and facility directors.

Type of Request: Request for a new information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Number of responses	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
Competency and CIDI Screener	3,000	1	3,000	40	2,000
Baseline Interview	3,000	1	3,000	45	2,250
Quarterly Interview (Quarters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11)	3,000	9	27,000	20	9,000
Annual Interview (Quarters 4, 8, and 11)	3,000	3	9,000	30	4,500
Fidelity Assessment Participant Interview	180	4	720	60	720
Fidelity Assessment Family Member Interview	90	4	360	60	360
Key Informant Interview	120	4	480	60	480
Participant Focus Groups	600	2	1,200	60	1,200
Person-Centered Interview	180	4	720	60	720
Totals	13,170	.....	45,480	.....	21,230

2. Student Reporting Form—20 CFR 404.352(b)(2); 404.367; 404.368; 404.415; 404.434; 422.135—0960-0088. To qualify for Social Security Title II student benefits, student beneficiaries must be in full-time attendance status at an educational institution. In addition, SSA requires these beneficiaries to

report events that may cause a reduction, termination, or suspension of their benefits. SSA collects such information on Forms SSA-1383 and SSA-1383-FC to determine if the changes or events the student beneficiaries report will affect their continuing entitlement to SSA benefits.

SSA also uses the SSA-1383 and SSA-1383-FC to calculate the correct benefit amounts for student beneficiaries. The respondents are Social Security Title II student beneficiaries.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
SSA-1383	74,887	1	6	7,489
SSA-1383-FC	1,247	1	6	125
Totals	76,134	.....	.....	7,614

3. Advanced Notice of Termination of Child's Benefits & Student's Statement Regarding School Attendance—20 CFR 404.350-404.352, 404.367-404.368—0960-0105. SSA collects information on Forms SSA-1372-BK and SSA-1372-BK-FC to determine whether children

of an insured worked meet the eligibility requirements for student benefits. The data we collect allows SSA to determine student entitlement and whether to terminate benefits. The respondents are student claimants for Social Security benefits, their respective

schools and, in some cases, their representative payees.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection. SSA-1372-BK:

Type of respondent	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
Individuals/Households	99,850	1	8	13,313

Type of respondent	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
State/Local/Tribal Government	99,850	1	3	4,993
Totals	199,700	.....	.....	18,306

SSA-1372-BK:

Type of respondent	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
Individuals/Households	1,198	1	8	160
State/Local/Tribal Government	1,198	1	3	60
Totals	2,396	.....	.....	220
Grand Total	200,096	.....	.....	18,526

4. Request for Review of Hearing Decision/Order—20 CFR 404.967–404.981, 416.1467–416.1481—0960–0277. Claimants have a statutory right under the Social Security Act and current regulations to request review of an ALJ’s hearing decision or dismissal of a hearing request on Title II and Title XVI claims. Claimants may request Appeals Council review by filing a

written request using Form HA–520. SSA uses the information to establish the claimant filed the request for review within the prescribed time and to ensure the claimant completed the requisite steps permitting the Appeals Council review. The Appeals Council uses the information to: (1) Document the claimant’s reason(s) for disagreeing with the ALJ’s decision or dismissal; (2)

determine whether the claimant has additional evidence to submit; and (3) determine whether the claimant has a representative or wants to appoint one. The respondents are claimants requesting review of an ALJ’s decision or dismissal of hearing.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
HA–520	175,000	1	10	29,167

5. Disability Update Report—20 CFR 404.1589–404.1595 and 416.988–416.996—0960–0511. As part of our statutory requirements, SSA periodically uses Form SSA–455, the Disability Update Report, to evaluate current Title II disability beneficiaries’ and Title XVI disability payment recipients’ continued eligibility for Social Security disability payments. Specifically, SSA uses the form to determine if: (1) There is enough evidence to warrant referring the

respondent for a full medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR); (2) the respondent’s impairments are still present and indicative of no medical improvement, precluding the need for a CDR; or (3) the respondent has unresolved work-related issues. SSA mails Form SSA–455 to specific disability recipients, whom we select as possibly qualifying for the CDR process. SSA pre-fills the form with data specific to the disability recipient, except for the sections we ask the recipients to

complete. When SSA receives the completed form, we scan it into SSA’s system. This allows us to gather the information electronically, and enables SSA to process the returned forms through automated decision logic to decide the proper course of action to take. The respondents are recipients of Title II and Title XVI Social Security disability payments.

Type of Request: Revision of an OMB-approved information collection.

Modality of completion	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Average burden per response (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden (hours)
SSA–455	1,500,000	1	15	375,000

Dated: April 13, 2017.

Naomi R. Sipple,

Reports Clearance Officer, Social Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 2017-07796 Filed 4-17-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4191-02-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36105]

Genesee & Wyoming Inc.—Acquisition of Control Exemption—Atlantic Western Transportation, Inc. and Heart of Georgia Railroad, Inc.

On February 27, 2017, Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (GWI), a noncarrier holding company, filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 and 49 CFR part 1121 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 11323-24 to allow GWI to acquire control of Atlantic Western Transportation, Inc. (AWT), a noncarrier holding company, and indirect control of AWT's wholly owned subsidiary Heart of Georgia Railroad, Inc. (HOG), a Class III railroad. The Board will grant GWI's petition for exemption, subject to standard labor protective conditions.

Background

GWI is a publicly traded noncarrier holding company that currently controls, through direct or indirect equity ownership, two Class II carriers and 107 Class III carriers operating in the United States. (Pet. 1.) HOG is a Class III carrier based in Americus, Ga., that leases from the Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) and operates approximately 221 miles of rail lines in Georgia and Alabama. (*Id.* at 2.)

GWI states that it seeks to acquire control of HOG through the acquisition of the stock of AWT, the noncarrier parent company of HOG.¹ (*Id.*) Upon consummation, GWI would acquire direct control of AWT, and, because HOG is a wholly owned subsidiary of AWT, GWI would acquire indirect control of HOG. (*Id.*) HOG connects with several railroads, including two GWI subsidiaries: Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc. (GSWR) and Georgia Central Railway, L.P. (GC). (*Id.* at 3.) GWI states that, although there are some commonly served cities where the railroads connect, there are no

¹ GWI states that it and the individual shareholders of AWT have entered into a Stock Purchase Agreement dated February 7, 2017. (Pet. 2.) GWI further states that it expects to consummate the transaction after all of the closing conditions have been satisfied as set forth in the Stock Purchase Agreement, including the grant of this exemption from the Board, and that it hopes to consummate the transaction in the second fiscal quarter of 2017. (*Id.* at 5.)

customers that are served by GSWR or GC, on the one hand, and HOG, on the other, and that as such there would be no "2-to-1 customers" as a result of the proposed transaction. (*Id.*) GWI further states that the joint line movements (which already currently exist) between HOG and the GWI-affiliated railroads would not be used to foreclose vertical competition over efficient joint line routes with unaffiliated carriers. (*Id.*)

GWI states that it does not contemplate any material changes to HOG's operations, maintenance, or service, and that HOG would continue to operate as a separate railroad, though HOG's senior managers would report to a senior vice president of Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc., an affiliate of GWI. (*Id.* at 3, 4.) GWI states that no shippers would lose access to direct or indirect Class I connections, nor to any short line connections, or lose any service options. (*Id.*) GWI states that, as a result of this proposed transaction, HOG and its shippers would benefit from greater coordination and efficiencies, enhanced financial resources, more robust management support for operations and safety, and a broader set of relationships with national customers. (*Id.* at 4.) Georgia DOT does not oppose the transaction and asks the Board to review and approve the transaction expeditiously. (*Id.* at Ex. D.) No shippers have filed comments.

Discussion and Conclusions

The acquisition of control of a rail carrier by a person that is not a rail carrier but that controls any number of rail carriers requires approval by the Board pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 11323(a)(5). Under section 10502(a), however, the Board must exempt a transaction or service from regulation if it finds that: (1) Regulation is not necessary to carry out the rail transportation policy (RTP) of 49 U.S.C. 10101; and (2) either the transaction or service is limited in scope, or regulation is not needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power.

In this case, an exemption from the prior approval requirements of sections 11323-24 is consistent with the standards of section 10502. Detailed scrutiny of the proposed transaction through an application for review and approval under sections 11323-24 is not necessary here to carry out the RTP. Approval of the transaction would result in a change in ownership of AWT and control of HOG with no lessening of competition. An exemption would promote the RTP by: Minimizing the need for federal regulatory control over the transaction, section 10101(2);

ensuring the development and continuation of a sound rail transportation system that would continue to meet the needs of the public, section 10101(4); fostering sound economic conditions in transportation, section 10101(5); reducing regulatory barriers to entry, section 10101(7); encouraging efficient management, section 10101(9); and providing for the expeditious resolution of this proceeding, section 10101(15). Other aspects of the RTP would not be adversely affected.

Nor is detailed scrutiny of the proposed transaction necessary to protect shippers from an abuse of market power. According to GWI, no shipper would lose any rail options, and operations would not materially change. (Pet. 9.) Although HOG connects with two GWI-owned carriers (GSWR and GC), GWI states that there would be no 2-to-1 shippers as a result of the acquisition. (*Id.* at 10.) In addition, GWI states that HOG also connects directly with two Class I carriers (CSX Transportation, Inc. and Norfolk Southern Railway Company). (*Id.*) The Board will hold GWI to its statement that existing joint line movements between HOG and the GWI-affiliated railroads would not be used to foreclose vertical competition over efficient joint line routes with unaffiliated carriers. (*See id.* at 3.) Accordingly, based on the record, the Board finds that this transaction does not shift or consolidate market power; therefore, regulation is not necessary to protect shippers from the abuse of market power.²

Labor Conditions

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. Because GWI currently controls two Class II carriers³ and numerous Class III carriers, any employees adversely affected by this transaction will be protected by the conditions set forth in *New York Dock Railway—Control—Brooklyn Eastern District Terminal (New York Dock)*, 360 I.C.C. 60 (1979). *See* 49 U.S.C. 11326(a).

GWI, acknowledging that *New York Dock* applies, seeks Board confirmation that neither GWI nor HOG need to commence negotiations or consummate implementing agreements prior to the

² As there is no evidence that regulation is needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power, we do not need to determine whether the transaction is limited in scope. *See* 49 U.S.C. 10502(a).

³ Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad, Inc. and Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad, Inc. (Pet., Ex. A at 1.)