

without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>. See also <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice> for the privacy notice of [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Issued in Washington, DC.

**John Karl Alexy,**

*Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety,  
Chief Safety Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2020-0063]

#### Petition for Waiver of Compliance

Under part 211 of title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), this document provides the public notice that on July 14, 2020, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for a waiver of compliance from certain provisions of the Federal railroad safety regulations contained at 49 CFR parts 213, 214, 217, 218, 220, 228, 232, 236, 240, 242, and 243. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA-2020-0063.

ASLRRA, on behalf of itself and its member railroads, requests to renew emergency relief to allow for social distancing and workforce shortages, which was previously granted by FRA by letter dated May 22, 2020, in its emergency relief docket (Docket Number FRA-2020-0002). See <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FRA-2020-0002-0072>. FRA renewed this relief for an additional 60 days on July 20, 2020. See <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FRA-2020-0002-0095>.

ASLRRA also requests relief from the annual continuous welded rail training requirement at 49 CFR 213.7(c)(2). Short lines have postponed in-person training due to social distancing requirements, but based on the rise of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is unlikely that training will be possible. Additionally, ASLRRA requests clarification regarding refresher/recurrent training requirements for roadway workers under 49 CFR 214.343-214.357.

In support of its petition, ASLRRA states that continuing the relief to comply with guidance on social

distancing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is necessary to protect railroad employees. ASLRRA further states that extending the relief will enable railroads and their employees to maintain safe workplace practices. ASLRRA explains it anticipates needing such relief so long as CDC guidance recommending social distancing remains in place.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (Docket Number FRA-2020-0063).

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. If any interested parties desire an opportunity for oral comment and a public hearing, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number and may be submitted at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Communications received by September 4, 2020 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered if practicable. Anyone can search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the document, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). Under 5 U.S.C. 553(c), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) solicits comments from the public to better inform its processes. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>. See also <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice> for the privacy notice of [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Issued in Washington, DC.

**John Karl Alexy,**

*Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety,  
Chief Safety Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Health Services Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act that a meeting of the Health Services Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board will be held September 3, 2020, by teleconference. The meeting will be held between 12:00 p.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. EST. The meeting will be partially closed to the public from 12:15-1:00 p.m. EST for the discussion, examination, and reference to the research applications and scientific review. Discussions will involve reference to staff and consultant critiques of research proposals. Discussions will deal with scientific merit of each proposal and qualifications of personnel conducting the studies, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Additionally, premature disclosure of research information could significantly obstruct implementation of proposed agency action regarding the research proposals. As provided by Public Law 92-463 subsection 10(d), as amended by Public Law 94-409, closing the committee meeting is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6) and (9)(B).

The objective of the Board is to provide for the fair and equitable selection of the most meritorious research projects for support by VA research funds and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure the high quality and mission relevance of VA's legislatively mandated Health Services Research and Development program. Board members advise the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the scientific and technical merit, the mission relevance, and the protection of human subjects of Health Services Research and Development proposals. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

Members of the public who wish to attend the open portion of the teleconference session from 12-12:15 p.m. EST may dial 1-800-767-1750, participant code 27960#.

Written comments from the public must be sent to Liza Catucci, Designated Federal Officer, Health Services Research and Development Service,

Department of Veterans Affairs (10X2H), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, or to *Liza.Catucci@va.gov* prior to the meeting. Those who plan to attend the open portion of the meeting

must contact Ms. Catucci at least 5 days before the meeting. For further information, please call Ms. Catucci at 202-443-5797.

Dated: July 31, 2020.

**LaTonya L. Small,**  
*Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.*

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