

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[SEC File No. 270-418, OMB Control No. 3235-0485]

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From: Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of FOIA Services, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549-2736

Extension:
Rule 15c2-1

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ("PRA") (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") is soliciting comments on the existing collection of information provided for in Rule 15c2-1, (17 CFR 240.15c2-1), under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78a *et seq.*). The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") for extension and approval.

Rule 15c2-1 prohibits the commingling under the same lien of securities of margin customers (a) with other customers without their written consent, and (b) with the broker-dealer. The rule also prohibits the re-hypothecation of customers' margin securities for a sum in excess of the customer's aggregate indebtedness. Pursuant to Rule 15c2-1, respondents must collect information necessary to prevent the re-hypothecation of customer securities in contravention of the rule, issue and retain copies of notices of hypothecation of customer securities in accordance with the rule, and collect written consents from customers in accordance with the rule. The information is necessary to ensure compliance with the rule, and to advise customers of the rule's protections.

There are approximately 48 respondents (*i.e.*, broker-dealers that conducted business with the public, filed Part II or Part IICSE of the FOCUS Report, did not claim an exemption from the Rule 15c3-3 reserve formula computation, and reported that they had a bank loan during at least one quarter of the current year) that require an aggregate total of approximately 1,080 hours to comply with the rule. Each of these approximately 48 registered broker-dealers makes an estimated 45 annual responses. Each response takes approximately 0.5 hours to complete. Thus, the total burden per year is approximately 1,080 hours.

Written comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of

information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimates of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information under the PRA unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Please direct your written comments to: David Bottom, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o Cynthia Roscoe, 100 F Street NE Washington, DC 20549, or send an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov.

Dated: December 18, 2020.

J. Matthew DeLesDernier,

Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2020-28424 Filed 12-22-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 11287]

Sudan; Determination Under Presidential Proclamation

I hereby determine, in accordance with section 5 of Presidential Proclamation No. 6958, of November 22, 1996, that the suspension of entry into the United States of members or officials of the Government of Sudan (GOS) and members of the Sudanese armed forces is no longer necessary and should be terminated given the termination of the restrictive measures in UN Security Council Resolution 1054 and its successor resolution UNSCR 1070, and the significant shift in U.S. foreign policy toward Sudan following the installation of the new Sudanese Civilian-Led Transitional Government. Restrictions imposed in said proclamation, pursuant to Section 212(f) and 215 of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 as amended (8 U.S.C. 1182(f) and section 301 of title 3, United States Code shall therefore lapse, and said proclamation shall terminate effective immediately.

This determination will be reported to Congress and published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: December 15, 2020.

Michael R. Pompeo,

Secretary of State.

[FR Doc. 2020-28271 Filed 12-22-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-26-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36456]

Dutchtown Southern Railroad, L.L.C.—Lease and Operation Exemption—Illinois Central Railroad Company

Dutchtown Southern Railroad, L.L.C. (DUSR), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to lease from Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) and operate approximately 9,285 feet of track known as the Rubber Lead Track, extending from a point on the Line roughly adjacent to milepost 386 + 1636.15' on IC's parallel main line, extending southeastward to a point proximate to milepost 388 + 357' on the aforementioned, parallel-running IC main line in Geismar, Ascension Parish, La. (the Line).¹

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in *Watco Holdings, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Dutchtown Southern Railroad, L.L.C.*, Docket No. FD 36457, in which Watco Holdings, Inc., seeks to continue in control of DUSR upon DUSR's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

DUSR states that it and IC will shortly execute agreements pursuant to which DUSR will lease the Line from IC and will be the operator of the Line. DUSR further states that the proposed agreements between DUSR and IC do not contain any provision limiting DUSR's future interchange of traffic on the Line with a third-party connecting carrier.

DUSR certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in DUSR's becoming a Class II or Class I rail carrier. DUSR further certifies that its projected annual revenue will not exceed \$5 million.

The transaction may be consummated on or after January 8, 2021, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption

¹ The verified notice indicates that DUSR also will secure rights to operate into IC's Geismar storage yard for purposes of interchanging rail cars there with IC.

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 effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than December 31, 2020 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36456, should be filed with the Surface Transportation Board via e-filing on the Board's website. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on DUSR's representative, Robert A. Wimbish, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606-3208.

According to DUSR, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: December 17, 2020.

By the Board, Allison C. Davis, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Kenyatta Clay,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2020-28274 Filed 12-22-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36452]

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad, L.L.C.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Soo Line Railroad Company

On November 17, 2020, Wisconsin & Southern Railroad, L.L.C. (WSOR), a Class II rail carrier, filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for an exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10902 to acquire and operate over approximately 4.79 miles of rail line owned by Soo Line Railroad Company (Soo Line). The rail line extends from milepost 93.20 (at Hampton Avenue) to milepost 88.41 (south of State Street) in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wis. (the Line). WSOR concurrently filed a petition for waiver of the 60-day advance notice requirement of 49 CFR 1121.4(h). For the reasons discussed below, the Board will grant the petition for exemption and the petition for waiver.

Background

In 2007, WSOR received Board authority to lease and operate over the Line. *Wis. & S. R.R.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Soo Line R.R. (Lease*

Decision), FD 35012, slip op. at 1, 3 (STB served July 17, 2007).¹ According to WSOR, it has continued to lease, maintain, dispatch, and operate over the Line since 2007, but now seeks to purchase the Line from Soo Line.² (Pet. for Exemption 1–2.) WSOR states that, through ownership of the Line, it “will be able to exercise more complete control over investment decisions, and will be better positioned to offer responsive and efficient rail service into the future.” (*Id.* at 3.) WSOR states that the parties hope to close on their transaction before the end of the year and asks the Board, at Soo Line's request, for expedited consideration of its petition for exemption. (*Id.* at 2.)

WSOR also petitions the Board for a waiver of the 60-day notice requirement under 49 CFR 1121.4(h). Unless waived, section 1121.4(h) would require WSOR, at least 60 days before the exemption becomes effective, to post a notice of its intent to undertake the proposed transaction setting forth certain information at the workplace of the employees on the affected lines, serve a copy of the notice on the national offices of the labor unions with employees on the affected lines, and certify to the Board that it has done so. WSOR argues that the notice requirement would serve no useful purpose under the circumstances, pointing out that no Soo Line employees have worked on the Line for more than 13 years and that, because WSOR has operated the Line during that time, there is no new carrier. (Pet. for Waiver 3.) WSOR states that it “has no plans to modify its operation of the Line once its leasehold interest is converted to ownership,” and, therefore, no employees would be adversely affected by the proposed acquisition. (*Id.* at 2.)

No opposition to either the petition for exemption or the petition for waiver has been filed.

Discussion and Conclusions

Exemption from 49 U.S.C. 10902. Under 49 U.S.C. 10902, the acquisition of a rail line by a Class II rail carrier requires the prior approval of the Board. Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(a), however, the

¹ The petition for exemption notes that the *Lease Decision* listed the Line's southern limit as milepost 88.4, whereas the Asset Purchase Agreement governing the sale of the Line here lists it as milepost 88.41. WSOR states that this “minimal difference in mileposts—less than 53 feet—is believed to be a rounding error, and was not intended to signify a different point on the Line.” (Pet. for Exemption 1 n.1.)

² WSOR states that its proposed transaction with Soo Line also includes the transfer of a portion of Soo Line's Glendale Yard known as the “B” yard. (Pet. for Exemption 1.) The 2007 transaction also included the “B” yard. *Lease Decision*, FD 35012, slip op. at 1.

Board must exempt a transaction or service from regulation when 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 (a) the transaction or service is of limited scope, or (b) regulation is not needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power.

In this case, an exemption from the prior approval requirements of section 10902 is consistent with section 10502(a). Detailed scrutiny of the proposed transaction under section 10902 is not necessary to carry out the RTP. An exemption from the application process would minimize the need for federal regulatory control, reduce regulatory barriers to entry, and result in the expeditious handling of this proceeding. *See* 49 U.S.C. 10101(2), (7), (15). Other aspects of the RTP would not be adversely affected by use of the exemption process.

Moreover, regulation of the proposed transaction under section 10902 is not needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power.³ There would be no loss of rail competition and no adverse change in the competitive balance in the transportation market, as WSOR has been the carrier providing service over the Line since 2007. Nor would there be a change in the level of service to any shippers because “WSOR does not intend as a result of the proposed transaction to change materially its existing operations over the Line.” (Pet. for Exemption 3.)

Waiver of 49 CFR 1121.4(h). As noted, WSOR has petitioned for waiver of the 60-day notification requirement under 49 CFR 1121.4(h). The purpose of that requirement is to ensure that rail labor unions and employees who would be affected by the transfer of a line are given sufficient notice of the transaction before consummation. The Board takes seriously the requirements of the regulation, but it does not appear that the purpose behind the notice requirement would be thwarted if the requested waiver is granted in this case.

The record indicates that no railroad employees would be adversely affected by waiver of the requirement here. As WSOR explains, “[n]o Soo [Line] employees have worked on any portion of the Line in more than 13 years, and they (and the unions representing them) were advised of the transition to WSOR operation of the Line in connection with the *Lease Decision* transaction as of May 24, 2007.” (Pet. for Waiver 3.) WSOR

³ Because the Board concludes that regulation is not needed to protect shippers from the abuse of market power, it is unnecessary to determine whether the proposed transaction is limited in scope. *See* 49 U.S.C. 10502(a).