

the comment originator, identify the docket number for this notice (USCG-1998-3584), and provide background support for each comment. You may submit your comments and material by mail, hand delivery, fax, or electronic means to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**; but please submit your comments and material by only one means. When submitting by mail or hand delivery, submit your comments or material in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit them by mail and would like to know if the comments and/or material were received by the facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. The Coast Guard will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

Proposed Action

The U.S. Coast Guard intends to modernize its National Distress and Response System (NDRS). The NDRS forms the backbone of the Coast Guard's Short Range Communication System (SRCS) that supports a wide range of Coast Guard operations, including Activity, Group, Marine Safety Office (MSO), Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), Air Station, Cutter and Station operations. As part of the SRCS, the NDRS incorporates the use of VHF-FM radios to provide two-way voice communications coverage for the majority of Coast Guard missions in coastal areas and navigable waterways where commercial and recreational traffic exists. The NDRS consists of approximately 300 remotely-controlled VHF transceivers and antenna sites, and was originally intended for monitoring the international VHF-FM maritime distress frequency (Channel 16), and as the primary command and control network to coordinate Coast Guard search and rescue (SAR) response activities. The secondary function was to provide command, control, and communications for the Coast Guard missions of National Security, Maritime Safety, Law Enforcement, and Marine Environmental Protection.

In July 1998, the Coast Guard published a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) that considered general concepts for a new system to modernize the current obsolete and nonstandard National Distress System (NDS). The alternatives considered by the Coast Guard included:

Alternative A—Status Quo.

Alternative B—Upgrade status quo by systematically upgrading the existing network with modern analog

transceivers. This alternative replaces old equipment with new equipment and adds additional radio capability. It is expected this alternative would require additional antenna sites.

Alternative C—Dual Mode VHF and/or UHF Network replaces existing analog network with dual mode (digital and analog) transceivers. It is expected this alternative would require additional antenna sites.

Alternative D—Multi-mode: Satellite, Cellular, VHF and/or UHF Network. This alternative replaces the existing network with multi-mode equipment that uses satellite, cellular, and VHF/UHF communications. It is expected that this alternative would require additional antenna sites.

Alternatives B, C, and D would all require approximately the same number of additional antenna sites. Since 1998, new circumstances and relevant information regarding the deployment of the system to an existing antenna site, or leasing an antenna site, or constructing a new antenna site as well as the Coast Guard's preference for Alternative C called for preparation of a Supplemental Program Environmental Assessment to consider any environmental impacts that were previously not taken into account.

Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment

The Coast Guard has prepared a Supplemental Program Environmental Assessment (SPEA). The SPEA identifies and examines those reasonable alternatives to effectively deploy the modernized NDRS. The SPEA analyzed the no action alternative and three action alternatives that could fulfill the need and meet system requirements. The successful deployment of the NDRS will utilize a combination of only the action alternatives by using an existing antenna, leasing antenna space from a service provider, or constructing a new antenna site. The SPEA is a program document meant to provide a broad environmental review of a Federal agency's (Coast Guard) national program. In this case, the SPEA has provided a broad, general view of the environmental impacts that can be anticipated by modernizing and deploying the NDRS nationwide. The SPEA cannot foresee all possible site specific and cumulative environmental impacts as a result of implementing any of the action alternatives. However, once specific and individual sites have been identified for deployment of the NDRS, those sites will undergo a more narrow environmental review (tiering). This narrower environmental review of

individual and specific sites will result in the issuance of either (1) Categorical Exclusion, (2) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or (3) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The purpose of this Notice of Availability is to inform the public, local, State, and Federal government agencies that a Supplemental PEA is available for review and comment. You are encouraged to submit your comments, information, or other relevant observations concerning the merits of the alternatives and potential environmental impacts relating to the deployment and installation of the National Distress and Response System Modernization Project. Coordination with appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have expressed interest in this proposal has been undertaken and will continue. All comments will be considered in either the preparation of a FONSI or the development of an EIS (if necessary).

Dated: September 13, 2002.

C.D. Wurster,

RADM, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Acquisitions.

[FR Doc. 02-24729 Filed 9-27-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2002-12408]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company

The Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E) has petitioned the FRA for a waiver of compliance from the Railroad Locomotive Safety Standards, 49 CFR Part 229 and Locomotive Cab Sanitation, 49 CFR 229.137.

The EJ&E is asking for an extension of time for the installation of new toilet facilities in 27 locomotives. They are asking for an extension of one (1) year to be able to install two (2) toilets per month and bring them into full compliance with FRA regulations. The

specific time period will terminate on July 1, 2003, approximately one (1) year. At the end of the extension of time requested, all locomotives should be up to standard and meet the FRA requirements and standards in regards to complying with the Locomotive Cab Sanitation requirements, 49 CFR 229.137.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, 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 (*e.g.*, Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA-2002-12408) and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400-7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.—5 p.m.) at the above facility. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC on September 19, 2002.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 02-24725 Filed 9-27-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2002-13202]

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From Requirements

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification

of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Applicant

Kansas City Southern Railway, Mr. Vernon A. Jones, Signal Engineer, 4601 Blanchard Highway, Shreveport, Louisiana 71107-5799.

Kansas City Southern Railway seeks approval of the proposed modification of the Ouachita River Bridge, milepost V-72.07, on the Transcontinental Division, near Monroe, Louisiana. The proposed changes consist of the removal of the electrically-locked pipeline driven rail lock surface detection system; the addition of proximity sensors attached to the self-aligning Lift Rails and Bridge alignment rocker; and the monitoring by redundant logic controllers, to detect and verify the bridge member alignment. The reason given for the proposed changes is to improve safety and reliability.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the party in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.—5 p.m.) at the above facility. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, DC on September 17, 2002.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 02-24724 Filed 9-27-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA-2002-13201]

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From Requirements

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Applicants

Norfolk Southern Corporation, Mr. Brian L. Sykes, Chief Engineer C&S Engineering, 99 Spring Street, SW., Atlanta, Georgia 30303.
Columbus & Ohio River Railroad, Mr. Michael J. Connor, Vice President, 136 South Fifth Street, Coshocton, Ohio 43812.

Norfolk Southern Corporation and the Columbus & Ohio River Railroad jointly seek approval of the proposed modification and reduction of the interlocking limits at C. W. Tower, Columbus, Ohio, milepost N-704.8, Lake Division, Columbus, District. The proposed changes consist of the conversion of power-operated switches 44 and 55 to hand operation, and the discontinuance and removal of associated controlled signals 44R and 66L.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to improve and increase efficiency of operations.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the party in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.