

ACTION: Notice of request for comments.

SUMMARY: The FHWA invites public comments about our intention to request the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of a new information collection that is summarized below under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. We are required to publish this notice in the **Federal Register** by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Please submit comments by February 28, 2011.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket ID Number 2010-0171 by any of the following methods:

Web Site: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Fax: 1-202-493-2251.

Mail: Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

Hand Delivery or Courier: U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Allen Greenberg at allen.greenberg@dot.gov or (202) 366-2425, Office of Operations, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE. Washington, DC 20590, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Exploratory Advanced Research (EAR) Program initial stage research on the topic of Dynamic Ridesharing.

Background: The Exploratory Advanced Research (EAR) Program was established to conduct longer term, higher risk research that will result in potentially dramatic breakthroughs for improving the durability, efficiency, environmental performance, productivity, and safety of highway and intermodal transportation systems. To facilitate identification and assessment of higher-risk, breakthrough research topics, the Program conducts literature reviews, event scanning, and targeted convening. As part of an assessment of potential high-risk, breakthrough research on dynamic ridesharing, the EAR Program is conducting this collection of information on behavioral preferences using focus groups.

As a response to the opening of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in the Washington, D.C., metro area in the mid-1970s, a unique commuting phenomenon developed: "slugging." This type of single-trip dynamic carpooling evolved from drivers and passengers coming together to fulfill each party's needs (i.e., allowing drivers to meet HOV requirements and thus use the express travel lanes and riders to enjoy a free, fast trip to work). Academic and entrepreneurial types alike are looking at ways to facilitate dynamic ridesharing through technological means. Some suggestions for enhancing dynamic ridesharing include website forums that connect drivers with riders and Smartphone applications that would allow drivers and riders to register and connect with each other. These efforts build off of the success of three meeting-place based dynamic ridesharing systems that exist in Houston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. These three systems have no formal leadership or management; rather they have evolved to fulfill a need for carpools created by the presence of HOV lanes. These naturally occurring dynamic ridesharing systems operate by having drivers and riders meet at central, easily accessible locations such as park and ride lots where they create instantaneous carpools based on desired destinations. The lines are highly successful and have existed for a long time (30+ years in the case of DC), and they are a critical component to these robust dynamic ridesharing systems which serve thousands of commuters each weekday. Despite their success and interesting nature, they have been severely understudied by academics and transportation professionals. Focus group participants will be recruited based on a number of criteria. The primary factor is whether participants have utilized dynamic carpooling, then the frequency of their use and finally whether they work for the federal government or private sector. Participants would not be representing their place of work, and they would be asked to participate as members of the public on their own time outside of work hours.

Respondents: The Focus Group will send approximately 108 participants on a three-city tour (Washington, DC; San Francisco, CA; and Houston, TX) to study the informal, dynamic carpooling systems in each city. The government expects the contractor to recruit slugging/casual carpooling participants in each city.

Frequency: Annually.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: There will be approximately 9 focus groups (3 in each city); with each group consisting of 12 participants with a time commitment of 1.5 hours each person. The screening for potential participants will take approximately 5 minutes per person. There will be approximately 108 participants.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: The annual burden for the Focus Group would be between 162 hours. The annual burden for screening participants will be 9 hours.

Annual Total = 171 hours.

Public Comments Invited: You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for the FHWA's performance; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burdens; (3) ways for the FHWA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized, including the use of electronic technology, without reducing the quality of the collected information. The agency will summarize and/or include your comments in the request for OMB's clearance of this information collection.

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995; 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued On: December 22, 2010.

Judith Kane,

Acting Chief, Management Programs and Analysis Division.

[FR Doc. 2010-32723 Filed 12-28-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA-1999-6439, Notice No. 22]

Adjustment of Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of Adjustment of Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold.

SUMMARY: In accordance with Appendix D to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 222, Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings, FRA is updating the Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT). This action is needed to ensure that the public has the proper threshold of permissible risk for calculating quiet zones established in relationship to the NSRT. This is the fourth update to the

NSRT, which has fallen from 18,775 to 14,007.

DATES: The effective date is December 29, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ronald Ries, Office of Railroad Safety, FRA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 493-6299, or *Ronald.Ries@dot.gov*; or Kathryn Shelton, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 493-6038, or *Kathryn.Shelton@dot.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The NSRT is an average of the risk indexes for gated public crossings nationwide where train horns are routinely sounded. FRA developed this

risk index to serve as one threshold of permissible risk for quiet zones established under this rule across the nation. Thus, a community that is trying to establish and/or maintain its quiet zone, pursuant to 49 CFR part 222, can compare the Quiet Zone Risk Index calculated for its specific crossing corridor to the NSRT to determine whether sufficient measures have been taken to compensate for the excess risk that results from prohibiting routine sounding of the locomotive horn. (In the alternative, a community can establish its quiet zone in comparison to the Risk Index With Horns, which is a corridor-specific measure of risk to the motoring public when locomotive horns are routinely sounded at every public highway-rail grade crossing within the quiet zone.)

In 2006, when the final rule titled, "Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings," was amended, the NSRT was 17,030 (71 FR 47614, August 17, 2006). In 2007, FRA recalculated the NSRT to be 19,047 (72 FR 14850, March 29, 2007). In 2008, FRA recalculated the NSRT to be 17,610 (73 FR 30661, May 28, 2008). In 2009, FRA recalculated the NSRT to be 18,775 (74 FR 45270, September 1, 2009).

New NSRT

Using collision data from 2005 to 2009, FRA has recalculated the NSRT based on formulas identified in Appendix D to 49 CFR Part 222. In making this recalculation, FRA noted that the total number of gated, non-whistle-ban crossings was 41,326.

$$\text{Fatality Rate} = \frac{\text{Fatalities}}{\text{Fatal Incidents}} = \frac{347}{275} = 1.2618$$

$$\text{Injury Rate} = \frac{\text{Injuries in Injury-Only Incidents}}{\text{Injury-Only Incidents}} = \frac{970}{661} = 1.4674$$

Applying the fatality rate and injury rate to the probable number of fatalities and casualties predicted to occur at each of the 41,326 identified crossings and the predicted cost of the associated injuries and fatalities, FRA calculates the NSRT to be 14,007.

Issued in Washington, DC, on December 22, 2010.

Jo Strang,

Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety/Chief Safety Officer.

[FR Doc. 2010-32778 Filed 12-28-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

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

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 235 and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), the following railroad has petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of a signal system, as detailed below.

Docket Number FRA-2010-0175

Applicant: Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company, Mr. Timothy Luhm, Manager S&C, 17641 South

Ashland Avenue, Homewood, IL 60430.

The Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company (EJ&E) seeks approval of the proposed discontinuance of the traffic control system (TCS) on the Chicago Division near Gary, Indiana. The proposed discontinuance is from control point (CP) Kirk Yard Junction to, but not including, CP Stockton 2 on the Matteson Subdivision Main 1 and Main 2; and from CP Kirk Yard Junction to, but not including, Stockton 1 on the Lake Front Subdivision Main Track.

The discontinuance consist of the removal of the TCS on Main Track 1 and 2 between milepost (MP) 44.44 and MP 45.41 on the Chicago Division, Matteson Subdivision, and Main Track also known as the Lake Front Line between MP 11.19 and MP 12.10 on the Chicago Division, Lakefront Subdivision, as well as all tracks contained with CP Kirk Yard Junction between MP 45.41 and MP 45.66 on the Chicago Division, Matteson Subdivision.

The reason given for the proposed change is that the TCS impedes train operation on these tracks due to the congestion in the area from the Kirk Yard operations. There are plans in place to change track and switch arrangements in this area to facilitate future operations at Kirk Yard.

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-2010-1075) and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.
- *Mail:* Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

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