

**Surface Transportation Board to Place All Case-Related Filings on Its Website as of February 6, 2002; Announces Rulemaking on New Filing Procedures**

Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced that, **as of today, February 6, 2002**, all substantive and procedural paper documents and correspondence filed with the Board in formal proceedings, except those marked "Confidential," will be electronically scanned and placed on its website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>. Related to the announcement of this new feature, the Board also announced final rules on new document-filing procedures to facilitate scanning.

**Scanning for Website.** With the exception of confidential documents, all substantive and procedural paper documents will be electronically accessible via the "Filings" link on the Board's Home Page. Users will be able to search filings by filing date or docket number, and view, print and download documents. Filings marked "Confidential" also will be scanned and will be searchable on the Board's website so that users will be able to tell that a confidential filing exists. However, Internet users will not be able to view, print or download confidential filings; only Board Members and staff will be able to do so.

The Board annually processes nearly 3,000 filings--many totaling tens or hundreds of pages each--from law firms, businesses, governmental agencies, and members of the public. For the most part, currently such filings can be viewed only at the Board's headquarters in their original, paper form or, approximately 45 days after their filing date, in the form of microfiche to which they are converted.

For the past year, however, the Board has been making certain filings available on its website. The Board is now placing all filings on its website to make them more accessible to the public. This feature is just the latest in a series of "user friendly" enhancements to the Board's website, which the Board has continued to pursue particularly in view of the positive feedback from users concerning the agency's website design, reference clarity, ease of use, document accessibility, topical linkages, and electronic news-release access.

**Rules for Filed Documents.** In a related announcement, the Board said that it has amended its rules governing how documents are filed in agency proceedings to facilitate the scanning of documents for placement on the Board's website. To ensure that the highest-quality image is captured, paper and print standards are adopted that will provide adequate contrast for scanning, viewing and reproduction. To facilitate high-speed scanning, the rules prescribe measures to ease the handling and processing of documents, including direction on how original documents are to be bound, the use of divider tabs, pagination and the use of color. The Board amended its rules in a decision issued today in the proceeding entitled *Electronic Access to Case Filings*, Ex Parte No. 576.

**Mail Delivery.** In connection with today's announcements, Chairman Morgan also provided the public with the current status of the timeliness and condition of recent mail deliveries to the agency. In four postal-delivery advisory updates posted to its website between October 23 and November 28, 2001, the Board advised interested persons and parties that, following recent events involving postal facilities within Washington, D.C., the agency had experienced delays in the receipt of materials mailed to it. While mail delivery to the Board has improved lately, it has yet to return to its former level of timeliness. This is largely because of the several days' delay involved in the U.S. Postal Service's collection of all mail destined for the Board (and other federal agencies in the Capital area), the shipment of that mail to nearby states for precautionary irradiation, and the mail's redelivery to the Capital area. Additionally, the public should be aware and take into account that, as described in a recently published news story, the irradiation process does leave mail in somewhat of an altered state and may harm computer disks, slides and other plastics.

A printed copy of today's decision in Ex Parte No. 576 is available for a fee by contacting **D~2-D~ Legal, Room 405, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 293-7776**, or via [Da\\_To\\_Da@Hotmail.com](mailto:Da_To_Da@Hotmail.com). The decision also is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

###