

**Surface Transportation Board & Cooperating Agencies Issue Draft Environmental Impact Statement for "San Jacinto Rail's"  
Proposed "Bayport Loop" Railroad Construction & Operation**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) announced today that its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) regarding the proposed construction by San Jacinto Rail Limited, and operation by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) (referred to collectively as "applicants"), of approximately 12.8 miles of new railroad line near Houston, Harris County, Texas. The Board welcomes public review and comment on the Draft EIS. Written or faxed comments are due by **January 27, 2003**.

The primary purpose of the applicants' proposal is to serve the petrochemical industries in the Houston-area Bayport Industrial District (Bayport Loop). The Bayport Loop consists of approximately 24 shipper facilities. The "Union Pacific Railroad" is currently the only railroad serving the Bayport Loop. The proposed new line would provide BNSF with access to Bayport Loop facilities and would provide area shippers with a choice of rail service.

Working with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (cooperating agencies), SEA issued the Draft EIS as part of the environmental-review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Draft EIS is part of SEA's ongoing evaluation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, and is based on SEA's independent analysis that included an extensive public scoping process to identify potential environmental issues, review public comments, and consult with public agencies.

In addition to analyzing the applicants' proposal, the Draft EIS, as required by Federal law, evaluates reasonable and feasible alternatives, including a No-Action Alternative and the Build Alternatives (that is, alternatives involving construction that would cause moderate wetland, surface-water, and biological impacts). In addition, the Draft EIS evaluates the applicants' proposed voluntary-mitigation measures. Such measures address moderate environmental impacts and a range of additional issues of community interest. The Draft EIS also finds that the applicants' proposal and alternatives would cause negligible effects on all other impact areas.

Because of its size, distribution of the entire Draft EIS has been limited to governmental agencies, elected officials, community groups, and parties of record (official participants). However, a Notice of Availability has been distributed to over 1,000 other interested parties, including private citizens, and SEA also has distributed the Draft EIS to the repositories listed below asking that the entire document be made publicly available in respective reference areas. A Spanish translation of the Executive Summary of the Draft EIS also will be available at the following repositories:

**San Jacinto College  
Central Campus Library  
8060 Spencer Highway  
Pasadena, TX 77505  
(281) 476-1850**

**San Jacinto College  
North Campus Library  
5800 Uvalde Street  
Houston, TX 77015  
(281) 459-7116**

**San Jacinto College  
South Campus**

**13735 Beamer Road  
Houston, TX 77089  
(281) 922-3416**

**University of Houston  
Clear Lake Campus  
Alfred Neumann Library  
2700 Bay Area Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77058  
(281) 283-3930**

**Freeman Memorial Branch Library  
16602 Diana Lane  
Houston, TX 77062  
(281) 488-1906**

**Harris County Public Library  
Evelyn Meador Branch  
2400 N. Meyer Road  
Seabrook, TX 77586  
(281) 474-9142**

**Harris County Public Library  
South Houston Branch  
607 Avenue A  
South Houston, TX 77587  
(713) 941-2385**

**Pasadena Public Library  
Fairmont Branch  
4330 Fairmont Parkway  
Pasadena, TX 77504  
(713) 998-1095**

**Pasadena Public Library  
Main Branch  
1201 Jeff Ginn Memorial  
Pasadena, TX 77506  
(713) 477-0276**

**Deer Park Public Library  
3009 Center Street  
Deer Park, TX 77536-7099  
(281) 478-7208**

**Houston Public Library  
500 McKinney Avenue  
Houston, TX 77002  
(713) 247-2222**

**Park Place Regional Library  
8145 Park Place Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77017  
(832) 393-1970**

**Patricio Flores Library  
110 North Milby Street  
Houston, TX 77003  
(832) 393-1780**

**Melcher Branch Library  
7200 Keller**

**Houston, Texas 77012  
(832) 393-2480**

**Bracewell Branch Library  
10115 Kleckley  
Houston, Texas 77075  
(832) 393-2580**

**Tuttle Branch Library  
702 Kress  
Houston, Texas 77020  
(832) 393-2100**

**Stanaker Branch Library  
611 S/Sgt. Macario Garcia  
Houston, Texas 77011  
(832) 393-2080**

**Liberty Municipal Library  
Geraldine D. Humphreys Cultural Center  
1710 Sam Houston Avenue  
Liberty, TX 77575  
(936) 336-8091**

**Sam Houston Regional Library  
Archives & Information Services  
FM 1011  
Liberty, TX 77575  
(936) 336-9921**

**Dayton Library  
307 West Houston  
Dayton, TX 77535  
(936) 258-7060**

**Crosby Branch Library  
135 Hare Road  
Crosby, TX 77532-8895  
(281) 328-3535**

**Lee College Library  
15010 FM 2100 Road  
Crosby, TX 77532  
(281) 328-1111**

**Austin Memorial Library  
220 South Bonham  
Cleveland, TX 77327  
(281) 592-3920**

**Kingwood Branch Library  
4102 Rustic Woods Drive  
Kingwood, TX 77345  
(281) 360-6804**

**Kingwood College Library  
20000 Kingwood Drive  
Kingwood, TX 77339  
(281) 312-1693**

mitigation. SEA, working with the cooperating agencies, will make its final recommendations on the proposal, including environmentally preferable alternative(s) and environmental mitigation, to the Board in a Final EIS. In making its final decision in this case, the Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments, the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and SEA's final environmental recommendations.

The public may comment on the Draft EIS by submitting written comments by **January 27, 2003** to the following address:

**Attention: Dana White**  
**Section of Environmental Analysis**  
**Environmental Filing FD No. 34079**

**Surface Transportation Board**  
**1925 K Street, N.W.**  
**Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Because of security-related, mail-delivery delays currently experienced by Federal agencies in Washington, D.C., SEA encourages that comments be faxed to it at **1 (866) 293-4979**. As faxed comments will be given the same consideration as comments received by mail, persons submitting faxed comments need not also send comments by mail.

In addition to its receipt of written comments, SEA will host two public meetings on the Draft EIS. At each meeting, SEA will give a brief presentation and interested parties will be invited to make oral comments, and SEA will have a transcriber present to record them in either English or Spanish. Written comments also may be submitted at the meetings. Meetings will be held at the following locations, dates, and times:

**Pasadena Convention Center**  
**7902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX**  
**January 14, 2003**  
**7:00 - 9:00 p.m. CST**

**Cesar E. Chavez High School**  
**8501 Howard Drive, Houston, TX**  
**January 15, 2003**  
**7:00 - 9:00 p.m. CST**

As both meetings will follow an identical format and agenda, it will be unnecessary to attend both meetings. Persons wanting to speak at a public meeting are strongly urged to pre-register by telephoning the Board's toll-free Environmental Hotline at **1 (888) 229-7857** (FIRS for the hearing impaired at **1 (800) 877-8339**) and by leaving their names; telephone numbers; the names of any groups, businesses, or agency affiliations, if applicable; and the date of the meeting at which they wish to speak. The deadline for pre-registration for all meetings is **January 7, 2003**. Those wishing to speak who did not pre-register will be accommodated at each meeting as time allows.

The Draft EIS was issued today in the case entitled *San Jacinto Rail Limited Construction Exemption and The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company Operation Exemption--Build-Out To The Bayport Loop Near Houston, Harris County, TX*, STB Finance Docket No. 34079. For further information about the Bayport Loop proposal, or to obtain the entire Draft EIS (in hardcopy or on CD-ROM) or its Executive Summary in Spanish translation, telephone the Board's toll-free hotline noted above. A printed copy of the Draft EIS is available for a fee by contacting **D~ 2 D~ Legal Copy Service, Suite 405, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 293-7776**, or via [da2dalegal@earthlink.net](mailto:da2dalegal@earthlink.net). The Draft EIS also is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

###