

STB REAUTHORIZATION ACT IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUES: STB TO HOLD INFORMAL MEETINGS FOR STREAMLINING AND EXPEDITING RAIL RATE CASES

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that its staff will hold informal meetings with stakeholders during April 2016 to explore and discuss ideas to expedite rate reasonableness cases.

Under the STB Reauthorization Act, the Board will be initiating a proceeding to assess how procedures to expedite court litigation potentially could be applied to rail rate cases. In addition to court litigation procedures, the Board intends to explore innovative ways to move stand-alone cost ("SAC") rate cases forward in keeping with the Board's substantially shortened timeframe to issue a SAC decision under the Act. The Board believes that holding informal discussions with stakeholders in non-public meetings will serve as a productive preliminary action toward the initiation of a meaningful proceeding.

These informal discussions will be used to enhance STB staff's perspective on strategies and pathways to expedite and streamline rate cases, especially SAC cases where the Board's time to analyze the record and issue a decision has been substantially shortened. In particular, the Board is inviting practitioners, consultants, and stakeholders who have significant experience in rate reasonableness cases to independently share their views and ideas for expediting rate cases. Participants are encouraged to meet in person with staff; however, teleconferencing will be available. Because the meetings are not part of a formal proceeding, official meeting transcripts or minutes will not be prepared.

"These meetings will be a valuable opportunity for STB staff and interested parties to talk openly and candidly about our procedures for handling rate cases, and to brainstorm ideas for improving our processes and expediting case resolution," STB Chairman Daniel R. Elliott said. "Additionally, these meetings will further my efforts to make the Board more available and accessible to our stakeholders."

Meeting times will be available Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays between 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. during the month of April. Interested persons are requested to contact the Rail Customer and Public Assistance office (202-245-0238) to schedule individual meeting times. Questions about the meetings should also be directed to RCPA.

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