

MEDIA ADVISORY: SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD REQUIRES MEDIA SEATING RESERVATIONS FOR "DIRECT" OBSERVATION OF APRIL 2 & 3 PUBLIC HEARINGS ON RAIL ACCESS & COMPETITION ISSUES

FOR RELEASE: Contact: Dennis Watson
Monday, March 23, 1998 (202) 565-1596
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MEDIA ADVISORY:

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
REQUIRES MEDIA SEATING RESERVATIONS
FOR "DIRECT" OBSERVATION OF APRIL 2 & 3 PUBLIC HEARINGS
ON RAIL ACCESS & COMPETITIVE ISSUES**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) today advised interested members of the media that requests for reserved seating for the Board's public hearings--beginning **April 2, 1998**--in the case [FOOTNOTE 1: *Review of Rail Access and Competition Issues*, STB Ex Parte No. 575.] concerning railroad access and competition issues must be received, **by fax only**, on or before the close of business (COB) on **Thursday, March 26, 1998**.

The Board will hold 2 days of public hearings beginning at **10:00 a.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, April 2, 1998, in the Board's Hearing Room, Room 760, on the 7th Floor of its offices in the Mercury Building, 1925 K Street, N.W., in Washington, DC**. Focusing on issues of rail access and competition generally--not on the Board's ongoing case [FOOTNOTE 2: *Rail Service in the Western United States*, STB Ex Parte No. 573.] specifically addressing rail service problems in the western United States, or on other pending matters such as the merger in the East--the hearings are being conducted at the request of Senator John McCain, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine.

Because of the interest in the matter at issue, limited seating is available to the media in the Hearing Room. A second room, the Brick Room on the 1st Floor of the Mercury Building, will be open and linked to the Hearing Room by a live, closed-circuit telecast of the entire hearings. As only 15 seats will be reserved in the Hearing Room for members of the media to observe the hearings directly, the Board is requiring that those wanting a seat must submit their requests, by facsimile only, to the Board by **COB March 26, 1998**, supplying the following information:

1. Name of seating requestor.
- 2 . Organization requestor represents.
3. Requestor's phone number.
4. Requestor's fax number.

This information must be faxed to:

"RAIL ACCESS & COMPETITION"

Office of Congressional & Public Services

Surface Transportation Board

Fax number (202) 565-9016

Hearing Room seating reservations will be limited to only one representative per news medium or news organization. All seating reservations will be accepted in the order in which they are received by fax. The 15 requestors for Hearing Room seating whose reservations are received first will be contacted to confirm receipt and to relay specific instructions for the issuance of media passes **in advance** of the hearing. Members of the media not admitted to the Hearing Room will be allowed to view the hearing via TV monitor in the Brick Room on a "first-come, first-admitted" basis.

Without exception, media members holding "Hearing Room" passes must be seated by **9:45 a.m.** each morning in the section reserved for them. Any seat reserved for a media member that is unoccupied at that time will be given to the media member who is next in order for a seat, according to a list the Board will compile based on its chronological receipt of media seating reservation requests. Hearing Room passes will be checked at the door and are non-transferable.

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