

FOR RELEASE
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**MEDIA ADVISORY: SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD REQUIRES MEDIA SEATING
RESERVATIONS FOR "DIRECT" OBSERVATION OF DECEMBER 3 PUBLIC HEARING
ON RAIL SERVICE PROBLEMS IN WESTERN U.S.**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) today advised interested members of the media that requests for reserved seating for the Board's **December 3, 1997**, public hearing in the case *Rail Service in the Western United States*, STB Ex Parte No. 573, instituted by the Board in a decision issued to the public on October 2, 1997, concerning railroad service problems in the western United States must be received, **by "fax" only**, on or before the close of business (COB) on **Tuesday, November 25, 1997**.

The Board will hold the public hearing beginning at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, December 3, 1997, in the Board's Hearing Room on the 7th Floor of its offices in the Mercury Building, 1925 K Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. Because of the intense 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 television monitor. As only 15 seats will be reserved in the Hearing Room for members of the media to observe the hearing directly, the Board is requiring that those wishing such seating must submit their requests, by facsimile only, to the Board by COB Tuesday, November 25, 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 SERVICE IN THE WEST"
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 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. Member 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.** 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 media passes will be checked at the door and are non-transferable.

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