

**MEDIA ADVISORY: SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD REQUIRES MEDIA SEATING RESERVATIONS FOR "DIRECT" OBSERVATION OF DECEMBER 15 ORAL ARGUMENT RE "HOUSTON/GULF COAST" RAILROAD OVERSIGHT**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) today advised interested members of the media that requests for reserved seating for the Board's **December 15, 1998** oral argument in the case [FOOTNOTE 1: *Union Pacific Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company and Missouri Pacific Railroad Company--Control and Merger--Southern Pacific Rail Corporation, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, SPCSL Corp., and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway Company [Houston/Gulf Coast Oversight]*, STB Finance Docket No 32760 (Sub-No. 26) and related cases.] concerning railroad service in the Houston, Texas-Gulf Coast region of the United States must be received, **by fax only**, on or before the close of business (COB) on **Wednesday, December 9, 1998**.

The **Tuesday, December 15 oral argument will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Board's Hearing Room, Room 760, on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor of its offices in the Mercury Building, 1925 K Street, N.W., in Washington, DC.** While the oral argument is open to the public, there will be no public participation.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 oral argument and the vote directly, the Board is requiring that those wanting a seat must submit their requests, by facsimile only, to the Board by **COB December 9, 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:

**"HOUSTON/GULF OVERSIGHT"**  
**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.** on December 15 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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