

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD DECIDES TO PURSUE WITH FRA JOINTLY A PROCEEDING TO DEVELOP REGULATIONS FOR SAFE IMPLEMENTATION OF BOARD-APPROVED TRANSACTIONS**

Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan today announced that the Board had decided to pursue initiation of a joint proceeding with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), to develop procedures for the safe implementation of railroad transactions approved by the Board. This decision follows the publication of an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking by the Board earlier this year, for which comments were received.

Entitled *Safe Implementation of Board-Approved Transactions*, STB Ex Parte No. 574, the Board's determination to proceed jointly with FRA follows the adoption, at the suggestion of FRA, of a "safety integration plan" (SIP) process in the Board's recent proceeding approving the division of Conrail between the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. Reflecting its continuing concern over rail safety considerations, the Board will be exploring through the joint development of a notice of proposed rulemaking in this proceeding whether to require SIPs in all rail consolidations and other transactions within the jurisdiction of the Board.

The joint proceeding demonstrates the commitment of both the Board and the FRA to ensure that safety remains a priority and that the process of devising rules for the safe implementation of Board-approved transactions is not unduly burdensome. The Board's decision states that the joint approach, if adopted, would facilitate coordination between the Board and the FRA and eliminate the burden on parties of having to participate in separate proceedings.

In issuing the Board's decision in STB Ex Parte No. 574 on July 27, 1998, Chairman Morgan stated that she is "looking forward to working with FRA and DOT to ensure that attention is directed to current rail safety issues, and to provide an expeditious means for safety to continue to be addressed in future rail proceedings before the Board, as appropriate."

###