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**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD CHAIRMAN DANIEL R. ELLIOT ANNOUNCES
DETAILS OF STB REAUTHORIZATION ACT**

Surface Transportation Board Chairman Daniel R. Elliott III today announced details of the Board's implementation of the STB Reauthorization Act of 2015.

Effective December 18, 2015, the Reauthorization Act changed the Board into a wholly independent federal agency. Prior to the Reauthorization Act, the Board was administratively aligned with the U.S. Department of Transportation, although it has been decisionally independent since it was created in 1996 by the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-88, 109 Stat 803).

Of major importance, the Reauthorization Act additionally:

--Expands the Board's membership from three to five Board Members.

--Allows a majority of Board Members to meet in private to discuss agency matters, if no vote or official action is undertaken within such a meeting, and if a meeting summary is made publicly available no later than two business days after the event. If the discussion directly relates to an ongoing proceeding before the Board, the meeting summary is instead made publicly available on the date of the final Board decision. Formerly, private meetings of Board Members on agency matters were prohibited.

--Gives the Board authority to initiate investigations and requires the Board to begin a rulemaking to establish a regulation relative to such authority.

--Directs the Board to adjust its voluntary arbitration process, including increases in the maximum damage awards.

--Shortens the timelines that apply to large rate case proceedings, including limits on the time allowed for discovery and the time allowed for development of the evidentiary record.

--Directs the Comptroller General of the United States (the head of the United States General Accountability Office) to begin a study of rail transportation contract proposals containing multiple origin-to-destination movements; and

--Directs Board submission of a rate case methodology report and quarterly reports on unfinished regulatory proceedings to pertinent Congressional committees.

The Reauthorization Act additionally requires Board production of an annual investigation report on actions the Board initiates on its own; quarterly reports on rate cases pending or completed; and quarterly formal and informal railroad service complaint reports.

The historical successor to the former Interstate Commerce Commission (1887-1995), the Board is an independent economic regulatory agency charged by Congress to resolve railroad rate and service disputes and to review proposed railroad mergers. The Board serves as both an adjudicatory and a regulatory body with jurisdiction over railroad rate and service issues and rail restructuring transactions (mergers, line sales, line construction, and line abandonments); certain trucking company, moving van, and non-contiguous ocean shipping company rate matters; certain intercity passenger bus company structure, financial, and operational matters; and rates and services of certain pipelines not regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Chairman Elliott noted that the Board will continue to notify the public of important actions taken by the agency regarding its implementation of the Reauthorization Act and attendant matters.

To read the entirety of the STB Reauthorization Act of 2015, click [here](#).

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