

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD****[Docket No. FD 36771]****Merrimack & Grafton Railroad Corporation—Change in Operator Exemption—in Grafton and Coos Counties, N.H., and Essex County, Vt.**

Merrimack & Grafton Railroad Corporation (MGRC), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption pursuant to 49 CFR 1150.41 to assume operations over the following railroad lines (the Lines), totaling approximately 52 route miles, owned by the State of New Hampshire through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT): (1) from milepost P 131.93 at North Stratford, N.H., to milepost P 145.21 at Colebrook, N.H.; (2) from milepost C 119.86 east of Wing Road in Bethlehem, N.H., to milepost C 130.7/P 101.9 at Hazen Road in Whitefield, N.H.; (3) from milepost C 130.7/P 101.9 at Hazen Road in Whitefield to milepost P 112.46/C 137.42 at Lancaster, N.H.; (4) from milepost P 112.46/C 137.42 at Lancaster to milepost C 145.76 (proximate to the Whistle Post located south of the West Street crossing at the connection with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad Company) at Groveton, N.H.; and (5) from milepost P 100.91 at Whitefield to milepost P 111.57 at Lunenburg, Vt. The verified notice states that the Lines are currently operated by New Hampshire Central Railroad, Inc. (NHCR).

According to the verified notice, MGRC, a subsidiary of Trans Rail Holding Company, has entered into an operating agreement with NHDOT to assume common carrier operations over the Lines. Upon consummation of the proposed transaction, MGRC will replace NHCR as the exclusive common carrier operator over the Lines.

MGRC certifies that the documents governing the proposed transaction do not include terms that would limit future interchange with a third-party connecting carrier. MGRC also certifies that its projected annual revenues resulting from the transaction will not result in the creation of a Class I or II rail carrier and are not expected to exceed \$5 million.

Under 49 CFR 1150.42(b), a change in operator requires that notice be given to shippers. MGRC certifies that it has provided a copy of its verified notice to all customers on the Lines.

The transaction may be consummated on or after May 26, 2024, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed). If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption

under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than May 17, 2024 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36771, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board via e-filing on the Board's website or in writing addressed to 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on MGRC's representative, Robert A. Wimbish, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606-3208.

According to MGRC, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

Board decisions and notices are available at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: May 7, 2024.

By the Board, Mai T. Dinh, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Jeffrey Herzig,**  
*Clearance Clerk.*

[FR Doc. 2024-10285 Filed 5-9-24; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-01-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****Notice of Availability, Notice of Public Comment Period, Notice of Public Meeting, and Request for Comment on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Drone Package Delivery in North Carolina**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; notice of public meeting; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announces the availability of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for Drone Package Delivery in North Carolina for public review and comment.

**DATES:** Send comments on or before May 30, 2024. The FAA will hold a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

**ADDRESSES:** Email comments to [9-FAA-Drone-Environmental@faa.gov](mailto:9-FAA-Drone-Environmental@faa.gov) or by mail to Federal Aviation Administration, Suite 802W, C/O AVS Environmental, 800 Independence Ave.

SW, Washington, DC 20591. Members of the public may view the virtual meeting via Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84319168260>.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For questions concerning this action, contact Nicholas Baker, Environmental Protection Specialist, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Office, Safety & Integration Division, Strategic Programs Branch, AUS-430; telephone 1-202-267-4714; email [9-FAA-Drone-Environmental@faa.gov](mailto:9-FAA-Drone-Environmental@faa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Draft PEA evaluates the potential environmental impacts of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) package delivery operations in the state of North Carolina. The proposed action analyzed in the PEA is UAS operators conducting commercial drone package deliveries under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 135 in North Carolina. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is the project proponent.

The Draft PEA is submitted for review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 303), and section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470). The draft PEA is available to view and download electronically at [https://www.faa.gov/uas/advanced\\_operations/nepa\\_and\\_drones/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/advanced_operations/nepa_and_drones/). The Draft PEA is available from any internet access, including from computers freely available at public libraries.

Based on the analysis in the Draft PEA, including any mitigation measures that may be used to prevent significant noise impacts, the FAA has preliminarily determined there will not be significant impacts to the human environment. As a result, an Environmental Impact Statement has not been initiated. The FAA intends for this PEA to create efficiencies by establishing a framework that can be used for “tiering,” when appropriate, to

project-specific actions that require additional analysis. As decisions on specific applications are made, to the extent additional NEPA analysis is required, environmental review will be conducted to supplement the analysis set forth in this PEA.

#### Public Meeting

The FAA will provide an overview of the project and potential environmental impacts at a virtual public meeting on May 21, 2024. There will be a question-and-answer session where the public will have the opportunity to ask questions about the project after the presentation. Following the question-and-answer session, the public will have the opportunity to provide oral comments on the Draft PEA. The opportunity to provide oral comment will be given in the order that the requests are received. Comments should be limited to three minutes and must be reserved to the topic of the Draft PEA. Commenters who may need longer than three minutes are strongly encouraged to submit a written comment. The FAA will accept written comments until May 30, 2024. The FAA will not respond to oral comments during the virtual public meeting, but will review and respond to oral comments in the same fashion as written comments in preparing the Final PEA.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is committed to providing equal access to this meeting for all participants. If you need alternative formats or services because of a disability, such as sign language, interpretation, or other ancillary aids, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

#### Comments Invited

The FAA invites interested stakeholders to submit comments on the Draft PEA, as specified in the **ADDRESSES** section of this Notice. The most helpful comments reference a specific recommendation, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting information. The FAA will consider all comments received or post-marked on or before the closing date. The FAA will also consider late filed comments if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 7, 2024.

#### Derek W. Hufty,

Manager, General Aviation and Commercial Branch, Emerging Technologies Division, Office of Safety Standards, Flight Standards Service.

[FR Doc. 2024-10232 Filed 5-9-24; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### Office of Commercial Space Transportation; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Open a Public Scoping Period, and Hold Public Scoping Meetings

**AGENCY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Park Service (NPS), Coast Guard (USCG), and Department of the Air Force (DAF).

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS, open a public scoping period, and hold public scoping meetings.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice provides information to Federal, State, and local agencies; Native American tribes; and other interested persons regarding the FAA's intent to prepare an EIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of issuing a commercial launch Vehicle Operator License to SpaceX for the Starship-Super Heavy launch vehicle at Launch Complex 39A (LC-39A) at Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Florida. SpaceX proposes to construct launch, landing, and other associated infrastructure at and in proximity to LC-39A. The proposal would also include Starship-Super Heavy launches at LC-39A; recoverable Super Heavy booster and Starship landings at LC-39A or on a droneship; and expendable Super Heavy booster and Starship landings in the ocean. The FAA will prepare the EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, and FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, as part of its licensing process. Additional information is available online at: [https://www.faa.gov/space/stakeholder\\_engagement/spacex\\_starship\\_ksc](https://www.faa.gov/space/stakeholder_engagement/spacex_starship_ksc).

**DATES:** The FAA invites interested agencies, organizations, Native American Tribes, and members of the public to submit comments to inform the FAA on the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS (e.g., range of actions, alternatives, environmental impacts). The public scoping period starts with the publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**. To ensure sufficient time to consider issues identified during the public scoping period, comments should be submitted by one of the methods listed under **ADDRESSES** no later than June 24, 2024.

All comments will receive the same attention and consideration in the preparation of the EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments, statements, or questions concerning scoping issues must be identified with the Docket Number FAA-2024-1395 and may be provided to the FAA as follows:

- *Federal E-Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Retrieve the docket by conducting a search for "FAA-2024-1395" and follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Please note that the FAA will post all comments on the internet without changes, including any personal information provided.

- By U.S. mail to Ms. Eva Long, FAA Environmental Protection Specialist, c/o Leidos, 2877 Guardian Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.

We encourage you to submit comments electronically through the Federal E-Rulemaking Portal. If you submit your comments electronically, it is not necessary to also submit a hard copy. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment—including any personal identifying information you provide—may be publicly available at any time. While you can request in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

When fully operational, SpaceX proposes that the Starship-Super Heavy launch vehicle will offer a heavy lift platform that expands the company's ability to execute the totality of its current and expected future customers' requirements. By providing a reusable launch vehicle, SpaceX proposes that the Starship-Super Heavy would deliver efficient access to space and enable cost-effective delivery of cargo and people to the moon and Mars. Currently, SpaceX is conducting flight tests of the Starship-Super Heavy at Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, an exclusive use launch site that serves as SpaceX's primary research, development, and flight test launch facility for the vehicle.

In September 2019, NASA completed the *Final Environmental Assessment for the SpaceX Starship and Super Heavy Launch Vehicle at Kennedy Space Center (KSC)* ("2019 EA") to evaluate the potential environmental impacts