

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

[Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA-2000-7926]

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) seeks a waiver of compliance from the provisions of the Track Safety Standards, 49 CFR section 213.55, regarding the allowable deviations from uniformity of track alignment. There are 2191 track miles on BNSF where the maximum allowable passenger train speed is 80 mph or less and the corresponding freight train speed is between 61 and 70 mph. Pursuant to 49 CFR section 213.9(a) of the Track Safety Standards, the allowable freight train speeds subject these locations to FRA Class 5 standards.

BNSF is petitioning for a waiver which would establish intermediate values for allowable alignment deviations over the 2191 track miles in question. The intermediate values would be more restrictive than those prescribed for FRA Class 4 track, but less restrictive than those prescribed for FRA Class 5 track. The petitioner cites the fact that the allowable freight train speeds are at the lower end of the Class 5 speed regime, and the existence of various operating restrictions which closely control freight train speeds within the 61 to 70 mph range, as arguments in favor of relief. The petitioner also states there have been no reportable or non-reportable derailments attributed to irregular alignment over these 2191 miles in the past five years.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number 2000-7926) and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular

business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at the above facility. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC on November 16, 2000.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****Research and Development Programs Meeting**

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a public meeting at which NHTSA will describe and discuss specific research and development projects. Further, the notice requests suggestions for topics to be presented by the agency.

DATES AND TIMES: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will hold a public meeting devoted primarily to presentations of specific research and development projects on December 14, 2000, beginning at 1:30 p.m. and ending at approximately 5 p.m. The deadline for interested parties to suggest agenda topics is 5 p.m. on November 29, 2000. Questions may be submitted in advance regarding the agency's research and development projects. They must be submitted in writing by December 4, 2000, to the address given below. If sufficient time is available, questions received after the December 4 date will be answered at the meeting during the discussion period. The individual, group, or company asking a question does not have to be present for the question to be answered. A consolidated list of answers to questions submitted by December 4 will be available at the meeting and will be mailed to requesters after the meeting.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Best Western Gateway International Hotel, Romulus, Michigan 48174, telephone number 734-728-2800. Suggestions for specific research and development topics as described below and questions for the December 14, 2000, meeting relating to the agency's research and development programs should be submitted to the Office of the Associate Administrator for Research

and Development, NRD-01, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 6206, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. The fax number is (202) 366-5930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In recent years, since April 1993, NHTSA has provided detailed information about its research and development programs in presentations at a series of public meetings. The purpose is to make available more complete and timely information regarding the agency's research and development programs. This is the twenty-eighth meeting in that series, and it will be held on December 14, 2000, at the Best Western Gateway International Hotel, Romulus, Michigan.

NHTSA requests suggestions from interested parties on specific agenda topics to be presented at this meeting. NHTSA will base its decisions about the agenda, in part, on the suggestions it receives by 5 p.m. on November 29, 2000. Before the meeting, NHTSA will publish a notice with an agenda listing the research and development topics to be discussed. The agenda can also be obtained by calling or faxing the request to the telephone numbers listed in this notice, through the E-mail address listed in this notice, or from NHTSA's Web site under Announcements/Public Meetings at URL <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/>.

NHTSA asks that the suggestions be limited to three topics, in priority order, so that the presentations at the December 14, 2000, meeting can be most useful to the audience. Specific research and development topics are listed below. Many of these topics have been discussed at previous meetings. Suggestions for agenda topics are not restricted to this listing, and interested parties are invited to suggest other research and development topics of specific interest to their organizations or items of general interest. Additionally, if any interested parties would like to make a presentation regarding technical issues concerning any of NHTSA's research programs, information concerning the proposed topic and speaker should be submitted in writing by 5 p.m. on November 29, 2000.

Specific R&D topics are:

- Fiscal Years 2000-2001 R&D Research Efforts,
- International Harmonized Research Activities (IHRA),
- On-line tracking system for NHTSA's research projects, and
- Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN).

Specific Crashworthiness R&D topics are:

- Preparation of new dummies for assessment of advanced air bag technology,
- Improved frontal crash protection (program status, problem identification, offset testing),
- Vehicle compatibility,
- Upgrade side crash protection,
- Child restraint/air bag interaction (CRABI) dummy testing,
- Head and neck injury research,
- Lower extremity injury research, and
- Thorax injury research.

Specific Crash Avoidance R&D topics are:

- National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS),
 - Intelligent vehicle initiative (the rear-end collision avoidance system operational test),
 - Drowsy driver monitoring,
 - Driver workload assessment, and
 - Lane change/merge collision avoidance system guidelines.
- Specific National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) topics are:
- Special crash investigation studies and
 - Crash avoidance data collection.

Separately, questions regarding research projects that have been submitted in writing not later than 5 p.m. on December 4, 2000, will be answered. The summary minutes of the meeting, copies of materials handed out at the meeting, and answers to the questions submitted for response at the meeting will be available for public inspection in the DOT Docket in Washington, DC, within 3 weeks after the meeting. Copies of this material will then be available at ten cents a page upon request to DOT Docket, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. The DOT Docket is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The summary minutes, handouts, and answers to the questions will also be available on NHTSA's Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/>.

Additionally, the agency is in the process of reviewing NHTSA's quarterly meetings on its safety performance standards and research and development programs. A survey has been posted on NHTSA's Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/> for those interested in commenting on the quarterly meeting process.

NHTSA will provide technical aids to participants as necessary, during the Research and Development Programs Meeting. Thus, any person desiring the assistance of "auxiliary aids" (e.g., sign-

language interpreter, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TTDs), readers, taped texts, braille materials, or large print materials and/or a magnifying device), please contact Rita Gibbons by telephone on (202) 366-4862, by telefax on (202) 366-5930, or by E-mail at rgibbons@nhtsa.dot.gov by 5 p.m. December 4, 2000.

Should it be necessary to cancel the meeting due to inclement weather or to any other emergencies, a decision to cancel will be made as soon as possible and posted immediately on NHTSA's Web site at [Announcements/Public Meetings at URL http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/). If you do not have access to the Web site, you may call for information at the contact listed below and leave your telephone or telefax number. You will be called only if the meeting is postponed or canceled.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rita Gibbons, Staff Assistant, Office of Research and Development, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-4862. Fax number: (202) 366-5930. E-mail: rgibbons@nhtsa.dot.gov.

Issued: November 16, 2000.

Raymond P. Owings,

Associate Administrator for Research and Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. MC-F-20976]

Tedesco Family ESB Trust—Acquisition and Merger—American Limousine Service, Inc., and Academy Express, Inc.

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board, Transportation.

ACTION: Notice tentatively approving finance transaction.

SUMMARY: Tedesco Family ESB Trust, Francis Tedesco and Mark Tedesco, settlers, of Hoboken, NJ (Tedesco Family Trust or applicant),¹ a noncarrier, has

¹ Tedesco Family Trust directly controls two motor carriers of passengers, Academy Bus Tours, Inc. (MC-165004), and Academy Lines, Inc. (MC-106207). It indirectly controls, through its noncarrier subsidiary, Franmar Logistics, Inc., of Hoboken, NJ, four motor carriers of passengers, Academy Bus Tours, Inc. (PA) (MC-215354), Academy Express, Inc. (MC-228481), Commuter Bus Line, Inc. (MC-162133), and No. 22 Hillside Corp. (MC-182453), and through its noncarrier subsidiaries, Franmar Equities, Inc., of Hoboken, NJ, and Consolidated Bus Service, Inc., one motor

filed an application under 49 U.S.C. 14303 for the acquisition of American Limousine Service, Inc. (MC-186879), and Academy Express, Inc. (formerly, Inner Circle Qonexions, Inc.) (MC-145482),² motor carriers of passengers, and their subsequent merger, and the merger of Academy Bus Tours, Inc. (PA), and Commuter Bus Line, Inc., into Academy Express, Inc., which will be the surviving entity. Persons wishing to oppose the application must follow the rules at 49 CFR 1182.5 and 1182.8. The Board has tentatively approved the transaction, and, if no opposing comments are timely filed, this notice will be the final Board action.

DATES: Comments must be filed by January 8, 2001. Applicant may file a reply by January 22, 2001. If no comments are filed by January 8, 2001, the approval is effective on that date.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of any comments referring to STB Docket No. MC-F-20976 to: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, send one copy of comments to applicant's representative: Fritz R. Kahn, 1920 N Street, NW., (8th Floor), Washington, DC 20036-1601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beryl Gordon, (202) 565-1600. (TDD for the hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The carriers being acquired and those being merged all hold federally issued operating authority and provide either local commuter bus service and other regular-route operations, or special and charter operations, or a combination of both. Collectively, these carriers operate between New York, NY, and various points in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), we must approve and authorize a transaction we find consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least: (1) The effect of the transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public; (2) the total fixed charges that result; and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees.

Applicant has submitted the information required by 49 CFR 1182.2, including information to demonstrate that the proposed transaction is consistent with the public interest under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b). Specifically, applicant has shown that the proposed

carrier of passengers, Funaway Tours of New Jersey, Inc. (MC-174942).

² Inner Circle Qonexions, Inc., filed for a name change in June 1995. It now has the same name as one of Tedesco Family Trust's existing carrier subsidiaries and will be merged into that subsidiary upon consummation of this transaction.