

waves of coordinated and highly publicized enforcement efforts (i.e., checkpoints) were implemented in every county. As a result, seat belt use increased statewide, from 65 percent to over 80 percent, in just a few months. This program provided the clearest possible evidence to demonstrate the potential of highly visible enforcement to increase seat belt use in a large jurisdiction (i.e., an entire State).

On the west coast, the State of California had expended much effort over the years to enforce its secondary enforcement law. These efforts were successful in increasing the statewide usage rate to about 70 percent, where it plateaued. In 1993, California became the first State to upgrade its seat belt law from secondary to primary enforcement. As a result, the rate of seat belt usage increased by 13 percentage points (from 70 percent to 83 percent) in the first year after the law was upgraded.

The California success was a major factor in rekindling interest among safety officials in upgrading their secondary enforcement laws as a way to increase seat belt use. In 1995, Louisiana became the second State to upgrade from secondary to primary enforcement. As a result, it experienced an 18 percentage point increase (from 50 percent to 68 percent) over the next two years. Next, Georgia upgraded its law and experienced a 15 percentage point increase (from 53 percent to 68 percent). After mounting a highly visible enforcement effort in 1998 (Operation Strap 'N Snap), Georgia's usage increased by another 10 percentage points. Similarly, Maryland upgraded its seat belt law in 1997, immediately mounted a two-month enforcement effort, and experienced a 13 percentage point increase in usage. In 1998, the District of Columbia reported a 24 percentage point gain in usage (from 58% to 82%) after enacting one of the strongest seat belt use laws in the nation and implementing several waves of highly visible enforcement. Following a 1999 three-week enforcement effort in Elmira, New York, belt use increased to 90 percent. Taken together, the experiences of North Carolina, California, Louisiana, Georgia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and most recently Elmira, New York have clearly demonstrated that highly visible enforcement of strong laws has tremendous potential for increasing seat belt use rates.

Visible enforcement of strong laws also appears to be an essential component of any effective program to increase the use of child safety seats. This is important since early use of child safety seats contributes to the later use of seat belts by children and young adults. There is also a strong relationship between child safety seat use. Studies conducted in several States have found that child safety seat use is nearly three times as high when a driver is buckled up as when a driver is not buckled up. Thus, efforts to persuade adults to buckle up may be the single most important way to get young children protected. However, with child safety seats, correct use is a major concern and the training of law enforcement officers, parents, and advocates is needed to minimize incorrect use and to ensure age-appropriate graduation to seat belts among young

children who have outgrown safety seats. Clearly, efforts to increase the use of seat belts and child safety seats are interdependent and complementary.

Prior to the 1977 passage of the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) law in Tennessee, very little progress was made to get young children buckled up. Nationally, child safety seat use was less than 15 percent at the time. However, the Tennessee law was followed by the enactment of primary enforcement CPS laws in all States by 1985. This wave of legislation resulted in a major increase in child restraint use. By 1990, usage was estimated to be above 80 percent for infants and about 60 percent for toddlers.

Unfortunately, problems such as child seat misuse, premature graduation to seat belt use that skips the important step of booster seat use, and variation in age coverage continue to exist. Another issue to emerge has been the danger posed by passenger side air bags to unrestrained and improperly restrained children. This has led to NHTSA's publication of a final rule for advanced air bags and a new emphasis on programs to increase the proper use of child safety seats and revitalized law enforcement efforts in this area.

Obstacles to Increasing Seat Belt Use

Over the years, all of the States and many public and private sector organizations have been active participants in efforts to increase seat belt use. Public information and education efforts have been the dominant programs funded over the past two decades. Many States have identified major obstacles to enacting primary seat belt laws or implementing highly visible enforcement programs, even though such programs have been shown to result in high usage rates. Most frequently, State (and local) officials have identified a lack of resources for law enforcement as the single greatest barrier to implementing more intense, highly visible enforcement efforts. This lack of resources extends to funding, human resources, and public information support to conduct such campaigns. Over the past five years, many officials have indicated that, if they had the kind of resources provided to States like North Carolina for the Click It or Ticket program, they too would be able to mount similar programs and achieve similar results. The significant amount of funding that has become available under this grant program, combined with the additional new resources available under other TEA-21 programs, should drastically reduce this obstacle.

The second most frequently mentioned obstacle to mounting highly visible enforcement programs is a lack of support from key State and local leaders. Experience with the national mobilizations (Operation ABC) and with jurisdictions such as North Carolina, Georgia, Maryland and the District of Columbia suggests that this obstacle can be overcome to a significant degree by proactive efforts to gain the understanding, support and endorsement of various public and private organizations. Including a broad spectrum of such organizations as coalition members in the State's occupant protection program can be very effective in obtaining the commitment of key persons (e.g., the

governor) and in gaining the support that is essential for sustained, highly visible enforcement efforts. Much innovation can be demonstrated in the way of developing public and official support for strong enforcement efforts.

Another obstacle frequently voiced by State and local enforcement officials is a lack of judicial and prosecutorial support for the enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws. It has frequently been pointed out that an enforcement program can be undermined quickly if prosecutors fail to prosecute seat belt and child safety seat violations and judges repeatedly dismiss such cases. This can be overcome to some extent by educating prosecutors and judges across the State and urging them to value occupant protection laws as highly as any other traffic safety law.

Buckle Up America Campaign

In October 1997, the Buckle Up America (BUA) Campaign established ambitious national goals: (a) to increase seat belt use to 85 percent and reduce child-related fatalities (0-4 years) by 15 percent by the year 2000; and (b) to increase seat belt use to 90 percent and reduce child-related fatalities by 25 percent by the year 2005. This Campaign advocates a four part strategy: (1) building public-private partnerships; (2) enacting strong legislation; (3) maintaining high visibility law enforcement; (4) and conducting effective public education. Central to this Campaign's success is the encouragement of primary seat belt use laws and the implementation of two major enforcement mobilizations each year (Memorial Day and Thanksgiving holidays). During the November 1999 mobilization conducted throughout the week surrounding Thanksgiving, over 7,100 police agencies from all 50 states participated in Operation ABC.

The BUA Campaign and the efforts of the Air Bag and Seat Belt Safety Campaign (including Operation ABC) provide a useful framework for the implementation of this grant program. They provide a blueprint for projects that States may wish to implement, using funds to be made available in accordance with this notice. Conversely, this grant program provides an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the ambitious goals established under the BUA Campaign.

[FR Doc. 00-13099 Filed 5-24-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

International Standards on the Transport of Dangerous Goods; Public Meetings

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: This notice is to advise interested persons that RSPA will conduct public meetings in preparation for and to report the results of the eighteenth session of the United Nations Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (UNSCOE) to be held July 3–13, 2000 in Geneva, Switzerland.

DATES: June 21, 2000 10 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 6244–6248; July 19, 2000, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 6244–6248.

ADDRESSES: Both meetings will be held at DOT Headquarters, Nassif Building, Room 6244–6248, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frits Wybenga, International Standards Coordinator, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety, or Bob Richard, Assistant International Standards Coordinator, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety, Department of Transportation, Washington, DC 20590; (202) 366–0656.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The primary purpose of the first meeting will be to prepare for the eighteenth session of the UNSCOE and to discuss U.S. positions on UNSCOE proposals. The primary purpose of the second meeting will be to provide a briefing on the outcome of the UNSCOE session and to prepare for the twenty-first Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (UNSCOE) which is scheduled for December 4–13, 2000 in Geneva, Switzerland. Topics to be covered during the public meetings include: (1) Global harmonization of classification criteria, (2) Reformatting the UN Recommendations into a model rule, (3) Criteria for Environmentally Hazardous Substances, (4) Intermodal portable tank requirements including requirements for the transport of solids in portable tanks, (5) Requirements applicable to small quantities of hazardous materials in transport (limited quantities) including package marking requirements, package quantity limits and requirements applicable to consumer commodities, (6) Harmonized requirements for compress gas cylinders, (7) Classification of individual substances, (8) Requirements for bulk and non-bulk packagings used to transport hazardous materials and (9) Hazard communication requirements including harmonized shipping paper requirements.

The public is invited to attend without prior notification.

Documents

Copies of documents for the UNSCOE meeting may be obtained by downloading them from the United Nations Transport Division's web site at <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc/dgscmm.html>. Information concerning UN dangerous goods meetings including agendas can be downloaded at <http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/meetings.htm#ST/SG>. These sites may also be accessed through RSPA's Hazardous Materials Safety Homepage at <http://hazmat.dot.gov/intstandards.htm>. RSPA's site also provides information regarding the UNSCOE and related matters such as a summary of decisions taken at the 17th session of the UNSCOE, meeting dates and a summary of the primary topics which the UNSCOE plans to address in the 1999–2000 biennium.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 22, 2000.

Robert A. McGuire,

Acting Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety.

[FR Doc. 00–13183 Filed 5–24–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–60–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33876]

State of Georgia, Department of Transportation—Acquisition Exemption—Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.

The State of Georgia, Department of Transportation (GDOT), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire from Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc. (GSR) certain railroad assets, including approximately 71.13 miles of rail line extending between Rochelle, GA (milepost 644.00), and a point near Preston, GA (milepost 713.00), and between Omaha, GA (milepost 753.00), and Mahrt, AL (milepost 755.13).¹

¹ The transaction does not include the right or obligation to conduct common carrier freight operations. Heart of Georgia Railroad, Inc. (HOG) acquired the exclusive rail freight easement over the rail line. *See Heart of Georgia Railroad, Inc.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—State of Georgia and Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33867 (STB served May 4, 2000). HOG currently conducts and will continue to conduct common carrier freight operations over the rail line. Neither GDOT nor GSR will have a

The transaction is scheduled to take place as soon as possible after the May 22, 2000 effective date of the exemption.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.² Petitions to reopen the proceeding 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 transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33876, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Luke Cousins, State of Georgia, Department of Transportation, #2 Capitol Square, S.W., Atlanta, GA 30334–1002.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at “WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: May 18, 2000.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00–13171 Filed 5–24–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–00–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

May 16, 2000.

The Department of Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before June 26, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

common carrier obligation to provide freight services when this transaction is completed.

² A motion to dismiss has been filed in this proceeding. The motion will be addressed in a subsequent Board decision.