

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement:
Interstate 55/U.S. 64 (Crump
Boulevard), Shelby County, TN**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is issuing this notice to advise the public of its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) for potential interchange improvements to the Interstate 55/U.S. 64 interchange at Crump Boulevard in the western portion of Memphis, from McLemore Avenue to just west of Metal Museum Drive in Shelby County. This project is intended to improve regional and national transportation needs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Scott McGuire, Field Operations Team Leader, Federal Highway Administration—Tennessee Division Office, 640 Grassmere Park Road, Suite 112, Nashville, TN 37211.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Interstate 55 (I-55) at Crump Boulevard (U.S. 64) Interchange currently handles most north and southbound I-55 traffic through Memphis, Tennessee. Interstate 55 is one of the major transit corridors of the United States, linking New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis, and Chicago. It accommodates large amounts of personal automobile and commercial truck traffic. The current configuration of the I-55 at Crump Boulevard Interchange in Memphis, Tennessee is antiquated and creates multiple safety and efficiency problems.

With this notice of intent, FHWA and TDOT are initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Interstate 55/U.S. 64 (Crump Boulevard) project to study potential transportation improvements to the interchange. As part of the NEPA process, the purpose and need will be modified as necessary to account for any changes in regional or national needs or goals.

The alternatives development and screening process for the I-55/U.S. 64 project will be used as a starting point for the NEPA process. Recognizing that NEPA requires the consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives that will address the purpose and need, the Environmental Impact Statement will include a range of alternatives for detailed study consisting of a no-build

alternative, three build alternatives, as well as alternatives consisting of transportation system management strategies, mass transit, improvements to existing roadways, and/or new alignment facilities. These alternatives will be developed, screened, and carried forward for detailed analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement based on their ability to address the purpose and need that will be developed while avoiding known and sensitive resources. Letters describing the proposed NEPA study and soliciting input will be sent to the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies who have expressed or are known to have an interest or legal role in this proposal. It is anticipated that one formal agency scoping meeting will be held as part of the NEPA process, in the vicinity of the project, to facilitate local, State, and Federal agency involvement and input into the project in an effort to identify all of the issues that need to be addressed in developing the Environmental Impact Statement. Private organizations, citizens, and interest groups will also have an opportunity to provide input into the development of the Environmental Impact Statement and identify issues that should be addressed. A Public Involvement Plan will be developed to involve the public in the project development process. This plan will utilize the following outreach efforts to provide information and solicit input: newsletters, the Internet, e-mail, informal meetings, public information meetings, public hearings and other efforts as necessary and appropriate. Notices of public meetings or public hearings will be given through various forums providing the time and place of the meeting along with other relevant information. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are identified and taken into account, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning the proposed action and Draft Environmental Impact Statement should be directed to FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this proposed action)

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: September 17, 2004.

Scott A. McGuire,

Field Operations Team Leader, Federal Highway Administration, Nashville, Tennessee.

[FR Doc. 04-21925 Filed 9-29-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****Petition for Exemption From the
Federal Motor Vehicle Motor Theft
Prevention Standard; Mazda**

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Grant of petition for exemption.

SUMMARY: This document grants in full the petition of Mazda Motor Corporation (Mazda), for an exemption of a high-theft line, the Mazda MX-5 Miata, from the parts-marking requirements of the Federal motor vehicle theft prevention standard. This petition is granted because the agency has determined that the antitheft device to be placed on the line as standard equipment is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard.

DATES: The exemption granted by this notice is effective beginning with model year (MY) 2005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosalind Proctor, Office of International Policy, Fuel Economy and Consumer Programs, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Proctor's phone number is (202) 366-0846. Her fax number is (202) 493-2290.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a petition dated June 2, 2004, Mazda Motor Corporation (Mazda), requested exemption from the parts-marking requirements of the theft prevention standard (49 CFR Part 541) for the Mazda MX-5 Miata vehicle line beginning with MY 2005. The petition requested an exemption from parts-marking pursuant to 49 CFR 543, *Exemption from Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard*, based on the installation of an antitheft device as standard equipment for the entire vehicle line.

Section 33106(b)(2)(D) of Title 49, United States Code, gave the Secretary of Transportation the authority to grant a manufacturer one parts-marking exemption per model year for vehicle lines produced MYs' 1997-2000. However, it does not address the

contingency of what to do after model year 2000 in the absence of a decision under Section 33103(d). 49 U.S.C. 33103(d)(3), states that the number of lines for which the agency can grant an exemption is to be decided after the Attorney General completes a review of the effectiveness of antitheft devices and finds that antitheft devices are an effective substitute for parts-marking. The Attorney General has not yet made a finding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 33103(d)(3), *Long Range Review of Effectiveness*, and has not decided the number of lines, if any, for which the agency will be authorized to grant an exemption. Upon consultation with the Department of Justice, both agencies determined that the appropriate reading of Section 33103(d) is that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) may continue to grant parts-marking exemptions for not more than one additional model line each year, as specified for model years 1997–2000 by 49 U.S.C. 33106(b)(2)(C). This is the level contemplated by the Act for the period before the Attorney General's decision. The final decision on whether to continue granting exemptions will be made by the Attorney General at the conclusion of the review pursuant to Section 33103(d)(3).

Mazda's submission is considered a complete petition as required by 49 CFR 543.7, in that it meets the general requirements contained in 543.5 and the specific content requirements of 543.6.

In its petition, Mazda provided a detailed description and diagram of the identity, design, and location of the components of the antitheft device for the new vehicle line. The antitheft device is a transponder-based electronic immobilizer system. Mazda will install its antitheft device, a transponder based electronic engine immobilizer antitheft system as standard equipment on its MX–5 Miata vehicle line beginning with MY 2005.

In order to ensure the reliability and durability of the device, Mazda conducted tests based on its own specified standards. Mazda provided a detailed list of the tests conducted and stated its belief that the device is reliable and durable since it has complied with Mazda's specified requirements for each test. The components of the immobilizer system are tested in climatic, mechanical and chemical environments all keys and key cylinders should meet unique strength tests against attempts of mechanical overriding. The test conducted were for thermal shock, high temperature exposure, low-temperature exposure, thermal cycle, humidity temperature cycling, functional, random vibration,

dust, water, connector and lead/lock strength, chemical resistance, electromagnetic field, power line variations, DC stresses, electrostatic discharge, transceiver/key strength and transceiver mounting strength. Mazda's antitheft device is activated when the driver/operator turns off the engine using the properly coded ignition key. When the ignition key is turned to the "start" position, the transponder (located in the head of the key) transmits a code to the powertrain's electronic control module. Mazda stated that encrypted communications exist between the immobilizer system control function and the powertrain's electronic control module. The vehicle's engine can only be started if the transponder code matches the code previously programmed into the powertrain's electronic control module. If the code does not match, the engine will be disabled. Mazda stated that there are approximately 18 quintillion different codes and at the time of manufacture, each transponder is hard-coded with a unique code. Mazda also stated that its immobilizer system incorporates a light-emitting diode (LED) that provides information as to when the system is "unset". When the ignition is initially turned to the "START" position, a one-second continuous LED indicates the proper "unset" state of the device. When the ignition is turned to "OFF", a flashing LED indicates the "unset" state of the system. The integration of the setting/unsetting device (transponder) into the ignition key prevents any inadvertent activation of the system.

Mazda believes that it would be very difficult for a thief to defeat this type of electronic immobilizer system. Mazda believes that its proposed device is reliable and durable because it does not have any moving parts, nor does it require a separate battery in the key. Any attempt to slam-pull the ignition lock cylinder, for example, will have no effect on a thief's ability to start the vehicle. If the correct code is not transmitted to the electronic control module there is no way to mechanically override the system and start the vehicle. Furthermore, Mazda stated that drive-away thefts are virtually eliminated with the sophisticated design and operation of the electronic engine immobilizer system which makes conventional theft methods (*i.e.*, hot-wiring or attacking the ignition-lock cylinder) ineffective.

Mazda reported that in MY 1996, the proposed system was installed on certain U.S. Ford vehicles as standard equipment (*i.e.* on all Ford Mustang GT and Cobra models, Ford Taurus LX,

SHO and Sable LS models). In MY 1997, the immobilizer system was installed on the Ford Mustang vehicle line as standard equipment. When comparing 1995 model year Mustang vehicle thefts (without immobilizer), with MY 1997 Mustang vehicle thefts (with immobilizer), data from the National Insurance Crime Bureau showed a 70% reduction in theft. (Actual NCIC reported thefts were 500 for MY 1995 Mustang, and 149 thefts for MY 1997 Mustang.)

Mazda's proposed device, as well as other comparable devices that have received full exemptions from the parts-marking requirements, lack an audible or visible alarm. Therefore, these devices cannot perform one of the functions listed in 49 CFR 543.6(a)(3), that is, to call attention to unauthorized attempts to enter or move the vehicle. However, theft data have indicated a decline in theft rates for vehicle lines that have been equipped with devices similar to that which Mazda proposes. In these instances, the agency has concluded that the lack of a visual or audio alarm has not prevented these antitheft devices from being effective protection against theft.

On the basis of this comparison, Mazda has concluded that the proposed antitheft device is no less effective than those devices installed on lines for which NHTSA has already granted full exemption from the parts-marking requirements.

Based on the evidence submitted by Mazda, the agency believes that the antitheft device for the Mazda vehicle line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard (49 CFR 541).

The agency concludes that the device will provide four of the five types of performance listed in § 543.6(a)(3): Promoting activation; preventing defeat or circumvention of the device by unauthorized persons; preventing operation of the vehicle by unauthorized entrants; and ensuring the reliability and durability of the device.

As required by 49 U.S.C. 33106 and 49 CFR 543.6(a)(4) and (5), the agency finds that Mazda has provided adequate reasons for its belief that the antitheft device will reduce and deter theft. This conclusion is based on the information Mazda provided about its device. For the foregoing reasons, the agency hereby grants in full Mazda's petition for exemption for its vehicle line from the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541.

If Mazda decides not to use the exemption for this line, it should

formally notify the agency. If such a decision is made, the line must be fully marked according to the requirements under 49 CFR 541.5 and 541.6 (marking of major component parts and replacement parts).

NHTSA notes that if Mazda wishes in the future to modify the device on which this exemption is based, the company may have to submit a petition to modify the exemption. Section 543.7(d) states that a part 543 exemption applies only to vehicles that belong to a line exempted under this part and equipped with the antitheft device on which the line's exemption is based. Further, § 543.9(c)(2) provides for the submission of petitions "to modify an exemption to permit the use of an antitheft device similar to but differing from the one specified in that exemption."

The agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that § 543.9(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The agency did not intend in drafting part 543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be *de minimis*. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if the manufacturer contemplates making any changes the effects of which might be characterized as *de minimis*, it should consult the agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 33106; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: September 24, 2004.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

[FR Doc. 04-21977 Filed 9-29-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34547]

Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad Co.— Lease and Operation Exemption—Pan Western Corporation

Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad Co. (TTRR), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to lease from Pan Western Corporation (Pan Western) and operate approximately 2.66 miles of private rail line owned by Pan Western, extending from milepost 0.0 to milepost 2.66 in Clark County, NV. Pan Western intends to lease the railroad line to TTRR so that TTRR may initiate and provide common carrier rail operations on and over the

line. TTRR will become a Class III rail carrier. TTRR certifies that its projected revenues are not expected to exceed those of a Class III rail carrier or \$5 million annually.

The transaction was due to be consummated on or after September 9, 2004, the effective date of the exemption (7 days after the exemption was filed).

If the 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 transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34547, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on Jeffrey O. Moreno, Esq., Thompson Hine LLP, 1920 N Street, NW., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036-1601.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: September 22, 2004.

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

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 04-21981 Filed 9-29-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Office of Research and Development; Government Owned Invention Available for Licensing

AGENCY: Office of Research and Development, VA.

ACTION: Notice of Government owned invention available for licensing.

SUMMARY: The invention listed below is owned by the U.S. Government as represented by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and is available for licensing in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 207 and 37 CFR part 404 and/or CRADA Collaboration under 15 U.S.C. 3710a to achieve expeditious commercialization of results of federally funded research and development. Foreign patents are filed on selected inventions to extend market coverage for U.S. companies and may also be available for licensing.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Technical and licensing information on the invention may be obtained by writing to: Mindy L. Aisen, Department of Veterans Affairs, Acting Director,

Technology Transfer Program, Office of Research and Development (12TT), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420; fax: 202-254-0473; e-mail at mindy.aisen@mail.va.gov. Any request for information should include the Number and Title for the relevant invention as indicated below. Issued patents may be obtained from the Commissioner of Patents, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The invention available for licensing is: PCT Patent Application No. PCT/US03/25189 "Touch Screen Applications for Outpatient Process Automation"

Dated: September 22, 2004.

Anthony J. Principi,

Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 04-21919 Filed 9-29-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Enhanced-Use Lease Development of Property at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Leavenworth, KS

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice of intent to enter into an enhanced-use lease.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) intends to enter into an enhanced-use lease of approximately 50 acres at the Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center in Leavenworth, Kansas. The selected lessee will finance, redevelop, manage, maintain and operate a mixed-use development that would provide services and accommodations relating to affordable senior housing, long-term care, long-term housing for veterans, transitional housing with supportive services for veterans, and educational and community support facilities on the site, at no cost to VA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Malinda D. Pugh, Office of Asset Enterprise Management (004B), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-8192.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 38 U.S.C. 8161 *et seq.* specifically provides that the Secretary may enter into an enhanced-use lease if he determines that at least part of the use of the property under the lease will be to provide appropriate space for an activity contributing to the mission of the Department; the lease will not be inconsistent with and will not adversely