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**Privacy Act:** Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review a Privacy Act notice regarding our public dockets in the January 17, 2008, issue of the **Federal Register** (73 FR 3316).

**Public participation:** The Federal eRulemaking Portal is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. You can obtain electronic submission and retrieval help and guidelines under the "help" section of the Federal eRulemaking Portal Web site. If you want us to notify you that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard, or print the acknowledgement page that appears after submitting comments online. Comments received after the comment closing date will be included in the docket and will be considered to the extent practicable.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Pearl Robinson, FMCSA Driver and Carrier Operations Division; Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards; Telephone: 202-366-4325. Email: [MCPSD@dot.gov](mailto:MCPSD@dot.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

FMCSA has authority under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315 to grant exemptions from certain parts of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. FMCSA must publish a notice of each exemption request in the **Federal Register** (49 CFR 381.315(a)). The Agency must provide the public an opportunity to inspect the information relevant to the application, including any safety analyses that have been conducted. The Agency must also provide an opportunity for public comment on the request.

The Agency reviews safety analyses and public comments submitted, and determines whether granting the exemption would likely achieve a level of safety equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved by the current regulation (49 CFR 381.305). The decision of the Agency must be published in the **Federal Register** (49 CFR 381.315(b)) with the reasons for denying or granting the application and, if granted, the name of the person or class of persons receiving the exemption, and the regulatory provision

from which the exemption is granted. The notice must also specify the effective period and explain the terms and conditions of the exemption. The exemption may be renewed (49 CFR 381.300(b)).

#### Request for Exemption

Virginia DMV requests an exemption from 49 CFR 383.77(b)(1), which allows States to waive the skills test described in section 383.113 for applicants regularly employed or previously employed within the last 90 days in a military position requiring operation of a CMV. Virginia DMV proposes that it be allowed to extend the 90-day timeline to one year following the driver's separation from military service.

Virginia DMV has a comprehensive Troops to Trucks program that assists service members in obtaining a Virginia CDL and civilian employment in the motor carrier industry. Feedback from the Troops to Trucks military partners has identified the 90-day limit as an obstacle to service members transitioning to civilian life.

Virginia DMV contends that the 90-day timeframe is too short for many of the qualified veterans to utilize while reentering civilian life.

According to Virginia DMV, since July 2012 183 service members have utilized the 90-day waiver through the Virginia Troops to Trucks program. It anticipates that an exemption would allow an additional 60 to 100 recent veterans to participate in the program per year. The one-year timeframe is consistent with FMCSA's November 2013 Report to Congress regarding a program to assist veterans to acquire CDLs. The American Trucking Associations has estimated that the motor carrier industry needs about 96,000 new drivers every year. Providing additional flexibility in section 383.77(b)(1) will help to expedite the transition of fully trained military truck drivers to civilian employment.

Virginia DMV believes this goal is in the Nation's best interest. A more accessible waiver period would greatly benefit returning veterans. This is consistent with FMCSA's belief that the skills test waiver serves an important function for military personnel returning to the civilian workforce, as stated in the May 9, 2011 **Federal Register** notice that created the 90-day waiver (76 FR 26864).

In addition, because the issues concerning the Virginia DMV request could be applicable in each of the States, FMCSA requests public comment on whether the exemption, if

granted, should cover all State Driver's Licensing Agencies (SDLAs).

A copy of Virginia DMV's application for exemption is available for review in the docket for this notice.

#### Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b)(4), FMCSA requests public comment on Virginia DMV's application for an exemption from 49 CFR 383.77(b)(1).

The Agency will consider all comments received by close of business on May 7, 2014. Comments will be available for examination in the docket at the location listed under the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. The Agency will consider to the extent practicable comments received in the public docket after the closing date of the comment period.

Issued on: March 31, 2014.

**Larry W. Minor,**

*Associate Administrator for Policy.*

[FR Doc. 2014-07695 Filed 4-4-14; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

**Docket Number MARAD-2014-0051]**

#### Ex-USNS COMET Available for Donation

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Notice: Vessel Available for Donation.

**SUMMARY:** The Maritime Administration (MARAD) plans to dispose of an obsolete vessel, the ex-USNS COMET (T-AK-269), which is currently located at its Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in Benicia, California. MARAD, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Office, determined that the vessel is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion c. The ex-USNS COMET is considered to be the first purpose-built oceangoing "roll-on/roll-off" vessel. Roll-on/roll-off, or Ro/Ro, describes how wheeled-vehicular cargo is loaded and unloaded.

MARAD is authorized to provide qualified public and non-profit organizations the opportunity to obtain, via donation, obsolete ships from the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) for use as memorials and/or in other non-commercial enterprises. Accordingly, MARAD is issuing this notice to provide the public and non-profit organizations such an opportunity. For donation application

information, please see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** below.

**DATES:** Completed donation applications must be received on or before July 7, 2014. MARAD will not consider completed donation applications filed after this date.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit completed donation applications identified as the ex-USNS COMET by any of the following methods:

- Email: [Shawn.Ireland@dot.gov](mailto:Shawn.Ireland@dot.gov) or (202) 366-5787. Include the ex-USNS COMET in the subject line of the message.

- Overnight Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, Office of Ship Disposal Program (MAR-640), 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, Attention: Shawn Ireland.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Please visit the MARAD Ship Donation Program at [http://www.marad.dot.gov/ships\\_shipping\\_landing\\_page/ship\\_disposal\\_program/ship\\_donation\\_program/Ship\\_Donation\\_Program.htm](http://www.marad.dot.gov/ships_shipping_landing_page/ship_disposal_program/ship_donation_program/Ship_Donation_Program.htm) or contact Shawn Ireland, Office of Ship Disposal, Maritime Administration, at (202) 366-5787.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

The ex-USNS COMET is considered to be the first purpose-built oceangoing “roll-on/roll-off” vessel. Roll-on/roll-off, or Ro/Ro, describes how wheeled-vehicular cargo is loaded and unloaded. This method was first developed during WWII for amphibious assault operations using short range landing craft. In the postwar period, the concept was refined and expanded beyond the assault class to include the rapid delivery by ship of vehicles carrying military supplies and equipment that could be immediately driven into forward staging areas. This eventually led to the development of the commercial Ro/Ro trade, particularly for cars and light trucks. The ex-USNS COMET has been nicknamed the “Mother of All Ro/Ros” in honor of its pioneering design.

The ex-USNS COMET operated as part of the common user fleet of the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS), later the Military Sealift Command (MSC). The vessel was designed by the naval architectural firm founded in 1920 by George G. Sharp. Sharp was a chief surveyor of the American Bureau of Shipping, and later designed many notable vessels, including the first nuclear-powered cargo-passenger vessel and National Historic Landmark N/S SAVANNAH. COMET influenced the design of future generations of roll-on/roll-off vessels,

particularly USNS METEOR, which is a larger version of the ex-USNS COMET. It is the lone ship of its class.

(**AUTHORITY:** The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, § 3512 of Pub. L. 108-136.)

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

**Julie P. Agarwal,**

*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2014-07671 Filed 4-4-14; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-81-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Surface Transportation Board**

[Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 361X)]

**Norfolk Southern Railway Company—  
Abandonment Exemption—in Prince  
Edward County, VA**

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR pt. 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon approximately 1 mile of rail line located in Prince Edward County, Va., extending from milepost N 167.9 (near the intersection of Pamplin Road/US Rte. 460 Bypass and Heights School Road) to milepost N 168.9 (0.6 miles east of the Appomattox County-Prince Edward County line), all of which is located in the Town of Pamplin City (the Line). The Line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 23958.

NSR has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years; (2) no overhead traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years and that overhead traffic, if there were any, could be rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the Line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the Line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7(c) (environmental report), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected

employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on May 7, 2014, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>1</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>2</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by April 17, 2014. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by April 28, 2014, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to NSR's representative: William A. Mullins, Baker & Miller PLLC, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20037.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

NSR has filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. OEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by April 11, 2014. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to OEA (Room 1100, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), NSR shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the Line. If consummation has not been effected by

<sup>1</sup> The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Serv. Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C. 2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

<sup>2</sup> Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,600. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).