

Dated: September 30, 2004.

C. Miller Crouch,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Trade Policy Staff Committee; Public Comments for Market Access Negotiations Under the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is requesting written public comments with respect to the expansion of market access opportunities in government procurement under the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement. The specific information being sought is described in the background section below.

DATES: Public Comments are due by noon, November 1, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Offices of the U.S. Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20508. Submissions by electronic mail: FR0446@ustr.gov. Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-6143.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning public comments, contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, TPSC, Office of the USTR, 1725 F. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20508, telephone (202) 395-3475. Questions concerning the expansion of market access opportunities in government procurement should be addressed to Jean Heilman Grier, Senior Procurement Negotiator, Office of the USTR, (202) 395-5097, or Scott Pietan, Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4337.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Chairman of the TPSC invites written comments from the public on the expansion of market access opportunities in government procurement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA). Comments should identify specific improvements that are needed in the current coverage of the Parties to the GPA. Such requests could include the

addition of specific government entities, state-owned enterprises or other government-related entities, the addition of services covered by the Agreement, and the removal of existing discriminatory measures or exclusions.

The Appendices with the current market access commitments or coverage of each Party can be found on the WTO Web site at <http://www.wto.org> under the trade topic "government procurement," with the details of Parties' market access obligations at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/loose_e.htm.

1. Background Information

The GPA is a plurilateral agreement that currently applies to 38 Members of the WTO. In addition to the United States, they are: Canada, European Communities (including its 25 member States: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom), Hong Kong China, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Netherlands with respect to Aruba, Norway, Singapore, and Switzerland. The GPA includes both procedures that all the Parties are required to follow when they undertake procurements covered by the GPA and market access obligations in the Appendices to the Agreement.

The Appendices include for each Party a positive list of the government entities that are required to comply with the Agreement when they undertake procurement above specified thresholds, subject to exclusions of certain goods. The government entities covered by the GPA include central government entities and government-related enterprises (such as state-owned enterprises), as well as, for most Parties, sub-central government entities. The Appendices also include a list of the services covered by the Party. In addition, the Parties set out exclusions and discriminatory measures in the Appendices.

The GPA calls for negotiations aimed at increasing market access opportunities under the Agreement through the greatest possible extension of coverage of government procurement by the Parties, on the basis of reciprocity, and the elimination of discriminatory measures and practices that distort open procurement. The GPA Parties have agreed to commence bilateral negotiations with the submission of initial requests to the other Parties for improvements in their coverage under the GPA by the end of

November 2004. Based on the requests, the Parties will exchange offers in the spring of 2005.

The comments will be considered in developing U.S. positions in the negotiations, including requests for improvements in the market access provided by other Parties under the GPA.

2. Requirements for Submissions

In order to facilitate prompt processing of submissions, USTR strongly urges and prefers electronic (e-mail) submissions in response to this notice.

Persons making submissions by e-mail should use the following subject line: "Expansion of Market Access under the WTO/GPA" followed by "Written Comments." Documents should be submitted as WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.txt) files. Supporting documentation submitted as spreadsheets are acceptable in Quattro Pro or Excel.

For any document containing business confidential information submitted electronically, the file name of the business confidential version should begin with the characters "BC-", and the file name of the public version should begin with the characters "P-". The "P-" or "BC-" should be followed by the name of the submitter. Persons who make submissions by e-mail should not provide separate cover letters; information that might appear in a cover letter should be included in the submission itself. To the extent possible, any attachments to the submission should be included in the same file as the submission itself, and not as separate files.

Written comments submitted in response to this request will be placed in a file open to public inspection pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.5, except business confidential information exempt from public inspection in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6. Business confidential information submitted in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6 must be clearly marked "Business Confidential" at the top of each page, including any cover letter or cover page, and must be accompanied by a nonconfidential summary of the confidential information. All public documents and nonconfidential summaries shall be available for public inspection in the USTR Reading Room. The USTR Reading Room is open to the public, by appointment only, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. An appointment to review the file must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance

and may be made by calling (202) 395-6186.

General information concerning the Office of the United States Trade Representative may be obtained by accessing its Internet Web site (<http://www.ustr.gov>).

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF).

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for the West Dowling Road Connection Project located in the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edrie Vinson, Environmental Project Manager, Federal Highway Administration, P O Box 21648, Juneau, AK 99802, (907) 586-7464 or Miriam Tanaka, P.E. Project Manager, ADOT&PF, Box 196900, Anchorage, AK 99519, (907) 269-0546.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the ADOT&PF, will prepare an EIS for the West Dowling Road Connection Project. The ADOT&PF has identified the need to enhance roadway connectivity and construct accessibility improvements in the West Dowling Road Connection Project area. The arterial network in the project area is poorly connected. Of the roads that are classified as arterials, none connect east-west across the project area. The road network that does exist (minor arterials and collectors that feed traffic to the arterials) is discontinuous, which limits accessibility and mobility within and through the project area. East-west barriers to through traffic in the project area are Campbell Creek, the Alaska Railroad tracks, and the controlled-access freeways (New Seward Highway and Minnesota Drive). Because of the limited roadway connections, accessibility is a concern of emergency service providers. For the land uses within the project area, the incomplete road network often results in long and

circuitous trip patterns. The lack of connectivity also hampers neighborhood access to residential areas and truck access to industrial areas. These problems add to traffic congestion on the adjacent street network. The project is identified in Anchorage's long-range transportation plan. As such, the improvement is an important component of maintaining compliance with federal carbon monoxide (CO) standards (Anchorage was recently reclassified from nonattainment to maintenance for CO).

A number of alternatives have been identified through a planning and scoping process. The EIS will examine the No-Build alternative and three build alternatives.

Project planning for the West Dowling Road Connection Project has been underway since 2002 with preliminary engineering and a public and agency scoping process. Stakeholder interviews held in August of 2002 provided an early, informal opportunity to meet with agency representatives to assess their expectations for involvement and to begin identifying agency-specific issues/concerns regarding the project. An initial round of public and agency scoping meetings was held on October 30, 2002. The second set of public and agency scoping meetings was held on May 14, 2003. A scoping summary report summarizing the public and agency scoping was published in November of 2003 and is available at the following Web site: <http://www.dowlingroad.com>.

Based on project issues and on public and agency involvement to date, the FHWA has determined an EIS is required. Official notice of agency and public scoping for the EIS will be issued in the near future. A public hearing will be held following the publication of the Draft EIS. Notice of the availability of the Draft EIS and date and location of the hearing will be published in the **Federal Register** and in the Anchorage Daily News. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA address provided above.

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

Issued on: September 28, 2004.

David C. Miller,

Division Administrator, Juneau, Alaska.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34545]

Genesee & Wyoming, Inc.— Continuance in Control Exemption— Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, Inc.

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of Exemption.

SUMMARY: The Board grants an exemption, under 49 U.S.C. 10502, from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323-25 for Genesee & Wyoming, Inc. (GWI), a noncarrier, to continue in control of Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, Inc. (TPR), upon TPR's becoming a rail carrier pursuant to a related transaction involving the lease and operation of a line of the Peoria and Pekin Union Railway Company.¹ GWI is a holding company that directly or indirectly controls 1 Class II rail carrier, 21 operating Class III rail carriers, and 4 non-operating Class III rail carriers. A line of one of GWI's subsidiaries, Illinois & Midland Railroad, Inc., connects at Pekin, IL, with the line to be leased by TPR in the related transaction.

DATES: This exemption will be effective on October 28, 2004. Petitions to stay must be filed by October 15, 2004. Petitions to reopen must be filed by October 22, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34545, to: Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, send one copy of pleadings to Jo A. DeRoche, Weiner Brodsky Sidman Kider PC, 1300 19th Street, NW., Fifth Floor, Washington, DC 20036-1609.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric S. Davis, (202) 565-1600 [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339].

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, e-mail or call: ASAP Document Solutions, 9332 Annapolis Rd., Suite 103, Lanham, MD 20706; e-mail asapdc@verizon.net; telephone (301) 577-2600. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through FIRS at 1-800-877-8339.]

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at www.stb.dot.gov.

¹ See *Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, Inc.—Lease and Operation Exemption—Peoria and Pekin Union Railway Company*, STB Finance Docket No. 34544 (STB served Sept. 28, 2004).