

a request for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favour of relief.

Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Docket Number FRA-2003-15144)

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) seeks a temporary waiver of compliance with the Locomotive Safety Standards, 49 CFR 229.125(e)(iii), as it pertains to the requirement for manual activation and deactivation of flashing auxiliary lights by the locomotive engineer. The waiver, if granted, is for SCRRA locomotives and control car locomotives being operated in passenger service by Amtrak crews over Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway track in Southern California under the name Metrolink. The locomotives and control car locomotives are equipped with a feature that automatically activates the change from continuously illuminated auxiliary lights to the flashing mode when the audible warning device (horn) or crossing bell are activated. Once deactivated, the flashing auxiliary lights will continue to flash for an additional 20 to 30 seconds. The waiver, if granted, would allow the automatic activation feature of the locomotive flashing auxiliary lights to time out when deactivated.

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 FRA-2003-15144) and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC. 20590-0001. 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 a.m.-5 p.m.) at the

above facility. FRA wishes to inform all potential commenters that 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 DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's Web site.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 19, 2003.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, Inc. (Docket Number FRA-2003-15340)

The American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, Inc. (AAPRCO) seeks a waiver of compliance from certain provisions of 49 CFR part 238, Passenger Equipment Safety Standards. Specifically, § 238.231(m)(2), which specifies that "up to two cars may be operated in direct release mode when the rest of the cars in the train are operated in graduated release mode, provided that the cars operated in direct release mode are hauled at the rear of the train consist." AAPRCO requests that a waiver be granted to modify the requirements of § 238.231(m)(2), to read as follows: "up to two cars may be operated in direct release mode when the rest of the cars in the train are operated in graduated release mode." Thereby, eliminating the placement

restrictions of the direct release cars to the rear of the train.

Approximately 50 private cars are equipped with an ABD type brake that can only operate in direct release mode. AAPRCO states that these types of cars have operated in Amtrak service for at least ten years without incident. Until recently, these cars have been placed anywhere in the Amtrak trains, although Amtrak has not allowed placement of two such cars adjacent to one another. They are usually separated by at least one car operating in graduated release brake mode.

The requirement of the placement of all such cars at the rear of the train has resulted in Amtrak's refusal to handle such cars on all graduated release mode trains where extra switching is required. This has reduced revenue to Amtrak and the inability of private cars to operate to certain locations. AAPRCO knows of no technical reason why the direct release mode car has to be placed at the rear of a graduated release mode train. The Talgo train, which supports the only gateway between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, B.C., has to have the private car next to the locomotive. Otherwise, AAPRCO contends that Amtrak does not support the need to place such cars in any particular location in the train. AAPRCO states that if this waiver is granted, it would allow flexibility in the make-up of the train, thereby making more trains and locations available for use by the Private Cars.

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 FRA-2003-15340) 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 a.m.-5 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>.

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 DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78). The Statement may also be found at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 19, 2003.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Broad Agency Announcement 2003-1, Funds Availability for Research Projects and Technology Advancements Under the Next Generation High-Speed Rail Program

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of funds availability: Broad agency announcement (BAA) for research projects and technology advancements under the Next Generation High-Speed Rail Program.

Introduction

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is soliciting proposal concept papers for various research projects, technology advancements and/or demonstrations, which can enhance the deployment of high-speed rail service in the United States. Technologies most likely to help facilitate the deployment of high-speed rail service are those which will (a) enhance the revenue-generating capability of high-speed operations by attracting greater ridership by reducing trip times, upgrading customer service quality, increasing reliability, or improving on time performance; (b) bring about capital cost reductions and economy in producing equipment and facilities; (c) reduce operating costs of high-speed rail service by providing more efficient operations; (d) improve the reliability of equipment and infrastructure components by reducing failures and/or

reducing false failure detections; (e) improve safety by reducing human and technology failures; and/or (f) enhance the social benefits and/or environmental aspects of high-speed rail.

Eligible Participants

This is an unrestricted solicitation. Any responsible source may submit a proposal concept paper for consideration, including, but not limited to, states or local governments, or organizations of state or local governments, universities or institutions of higher education, hospitals, non-profit organizations, private individuals, corporations, businesses or commercial organizations, except that any business owned in whole or in part by the Federal Government is not eligible. Although businesses owned in whole or in part by the Federal Government are not eligible for funding under the Program, they may contract with eligible participants. Cooperative arrangements (e.g., joint ventures, limited partnerships, teaming arrangements, or collaboration and consortium arrangements) are permitted and encouraged. Small, Small Disadvantaged (SD), and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Concerns, and Veteran-Owned (VO) and Woman-Owned (WO), and Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) Small Business Concerns, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Institutions (MIs) are encouraged to submit proposal concept papers on their own and/or in collaboration with others. However, no portion of this BAA will be set aside or reserved exclusively for Small, SD, or Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Concerns, or for VO, WO, or HUBZone Small Business Concerns, or for HBCU and MIs.

Exchanges and Points of Contact

Exchanges of information between interested parties and the Government, prior to submission of proposal concept papers, are strongly encouraged. Such informal exchanges may provide potential offerors with preliminary information on the Government's level of interest in prospective works or projects and possibly forestall costly effort on the part of interested parties whose proposed work may not be of interest to the FRA under this BAA. Any exchanges of information must be consistent with procurement integrity requirements of section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423, as amended) (see Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 3.104). For pre-submission technical inquiries, interested parties may contact the BAA

primary technical point of contact, Mr. Robert McCown (Tel: 202/493-6350, Fax: 202/493-6333), or one of the other, secondary technical points of contact identified in Appendix A of the BAA 2003-1 Proposal Preparation Package, located at the following address: <http://www.eps.gov/EPSTData/DOT/Synopses/1042/BAA-2003-1/> (* See Note). Offerors are advised that an indication of interest, in the affirmative, is not meant to imply nor in any way imparts an obligation on the part of the Government that an award will be forthcoming for the offered work or project. All non-technical inquiries should be directed to the Grants/ Contracting Officers, Mr. Robert Carpenter (Tel: 202/493-6153, Fax: 202/493-6171, Email: robert.carpenter@fra.dot.gov) or Ms. Illona Williams (Tel: 202/493-6130, Fax: 202/493-6171, Email: illona.williams@fra.dot.gov). After submission of proposals, all exchanges (both technical and non-technical) will be conducted through the Grants/ Contracting Officers in accordance with FAR 15.306.

BAA Time Line

BAA 2003-1 will be open from the date of posting of the BAA 2003-1 Proposal Preparation Package on FedBizOpps, formerly known as the Electronic Posting System (EPS), through June 30, 2004. Prospective offerors may submit and the FRA will accept proposal concept papers as of the date the BAA 2003-1 Proposal Preparation Package is posted on FedBizOpps and/or the **Federal Register**. Unless BAA 2003-1 is superseded or canceled, FRA will continue to accept concept submissions and inquiries through June 30, 2004. Although the BAA is open for an extended period, interested parties would be well advised to submit proposals as early as possible. Once posted, the BAA 2003-1 Proposal Preparation Package may be download or printed from the following Internet address: <http://www.eps.gov/EPSTData/DOT/Synopses/1042/BAA-2003-1/> (* See Note). The FRA does not intend to make the BAA 2003-1 Proposal Preparation Package available in hard copy. Reviews will begin and will be conducted continuously on receipt of concept papers. Offerors will be notified as soon as initial reviews are completed. FRA's target for initial review results is 120 days after submission.

Funding Authority and Related Information

Funds for this program are authorized in the Consolidated Appropriations