

4. Near-Term Improvement Alternatives: In addition, NJ TRANSIT has developed near-term improvements that could be developed incrementally in phases to expand trans-Hudson and PSNY capacity by 2010. During this near-term period, the effects of many new services such as the NJ TRANSIT Montclair Connection, the NJ TRANSIT Secaucus Junction, Amtrak High Speed Acela service, and expanded Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) service with dual-power locomotives and bi-level coaches will mature, and PSNY will not have the room to accommodate the resulting train and passenger demand. The proposed near-term improvements provide capacity enhancements at PSNY to meet these demands. The near-term improvements include: (a) A linear yard east of PSNY Tracks 1–5 under 31st Street to store up to six trains, which could be the first incremental phase of through tracks to Sunnyside Yard as in Alternative S; (b) an easterly extension of PSNY Platforms 1 and 2 to permit the operation of longer NJ TRANSIT trains; and (c) a new 12th Avenue Yard west of 10th Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets to store up to an additional 12 trains. The Near-Term Improvement Alternatives may be implemented as stand-alone projects, or as an initial phase of the build alternatives.

Any additional reasonable alternatives that emerge from the scoping process will be considered.

IV. Probable Effects

The FTA, NJ TRANSIT, and PANYNJ will evaluate both project-specific and cumulative changes to the social, economic, and physical environment, including land acquisition and displacements; land use, zoning and economic development; parklands; community disruption; aesthetics; historic and archeological resources; traffic and parking; air quality; noise and vibration; water quality; wetlands; ecologically sensitive areas; endangered species; energy requirements and potential for conservation; hazardous waste; environmental justice; and safety and security. Through the MIS process, the following environmental sensitivities have already been identified for consideration during the EIS.

In New Jersey these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Habitat and wetlands encroachment in the New Jersey Meadowlands; (b) hazardous materials disturbance and disposal associated with facilities such as the Malanka Landfill; (c) surface waters and floodplains, along with coastal wildlife habitats; (d) historic architectural (above-ground) and archaeological

(below-ground) resources; (e) electrical power transmission facilities; and (f) air quality and noise/vibration due to rail operations and park-ride facilities traffic.

In New York these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Hazardous materials disturbance and disposal; (b) air quality and noise/vibration associated with construction; (c) vehicular and pedestrian flow during construction; (d) utilities and their possible relocation during construction; (e) underground fuel tanks below buildings; (f) landmarks and historic buildings/structures; and (g) parks and recreation areas.

In the Hudson River and East River these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Regulations and associated permits from Federal and State jurisdictional agencies; (b) disturbance and disposal of hazardous materials; (c) marine and benthic (bottom-dwelling) habitat and wildlife disturbance related to alternative construction techniques.

Key areas of environmental concern would be in the areas of new construction (*e.g.*, new structures, new stations, new track). The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and for the long-term period of operation of each alternative. Measures to mitigate adverse impacts will be explored.

V. FTA Procedures

The EIS is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), the FTA/Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR part 771). This study will also address the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 4(f) of the 1966 U.S. Department of Transportation Act, the Clean Air Act, as amended, Section 6(f) the Clean Water Act, the Executive Orders on Environmental Justice, Floodplain Management, and Protection of Wetlands, and other applicable environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders.

The MIS that resulted in the recommendation to build a new Hudson River rail tunnel and related infrastructure on both sides of the Hudson River was issued in 2003. FTA intends to incorporate the MIS by reference into the EIS, as well as various supplemental studies conducted subsequent to the MIS, including an initial evaluation of the potential social,

economic, and environmental impacts of the MIS alternatives.

Upon completion, the Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment. Public hearings on the Draft EIS will be held within the study area. On the basis of the Draft EIS and the public and agency comments received, a locally preferred alternative will be selected for further analysis and refinement in the Final EIS.

Issued on: November 7, 2003.

Letitia Thompson,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03–28481 Filed 11–13–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements; Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the information collection abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. The nature of the information collection is described as well as its expected burden. The Federal Register notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on August 11, 2003. No comments were received.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 15, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Christensen, Maritime Administration, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: 202–366–5900; FAX: 202–488–0941 or e-mail: tom.christensen@marad.dot.gov. Copies of this collection also can be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Maritime Administration (MARAD).

Title: Voluntary Tanker Agreement.

OMB Control Number: 2133–0505.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Owners of tanker companies who operate in international trade and who have agreed to participate in this agreement.

Forms: None.

Abstract: The collection consists of a request from MARAD that each

participant in the Voluntary Tanker Agreement submit a list of the names of ships owned, chartered, or contracted for by the participant, and their size and flags of registry. There is no prescribed format for this information.

Annual Estimated Burden Hours: Fifteen hours (one hour per respondent).

Addresses: Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503, Attention MARAD Desk Officer.

Comments Are Invited on: Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication.

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 7, 2003.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-28477 Filed 11-13-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Announcing the Twelfth Quarterly Meeting of the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN)

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Meeting announcement.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the Twelfth Quarterly Meeting of members of the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network. CIREN is a collaborative effort to conduct research on crashes and injuries at ten Level 1 Trauma Centers linked by a computer network. Researchers can review data and share expertise, which could lead to a better understanding of crash injury mechanisms and the design of safer vehicles.

DATE AND TIME: The meeting is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, December 5, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Children's Harbor Building, 1600 6th Avenue South (corner of 6th Avenue South and 16th Street) in Birmingham, Alabama. This meeting will be hosted by the Mercedes Benz CIREN Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CIREN System has been established and crash cases have been entered into the database by each Center. CIREN cases may be viewed from the NHTSA/CIREN Web site at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-50/ciren/CIREN.html>. NHTSA has held three Annual Conferences where CIREN research results were presented. Further information about the three previous CIREN conferences is also available through the NHTSA website. NHTSA held the first quarterly meeting on May 5, 2000, with a topic of lower extremity injuries in motor vehicle crashes; the second quarterly meeting on July 21, 2000, with a topic of side impact crashes; the third quarterly meeting on November 30, 2000, with a topic of thoracic injuries in crashes; the fourth quarterly meeting on March 16, 2001, with a topic of offset frontal collisions; the fifth quarterly meeting on June 21, 2001, on CIREN outreach efforts; the sixth quarterly meeting (held in Ann Arbor, Michigan) with a topic of injuries involving sport utility vehicles, the seventh quarterly meeting on December 6, 2001, with a topic of Age Related Injuries (Elderly and Children), the eighth quarterly meeting on April 25, 2002, with a topic of Head and Traumatic Brain Injuries, the ninth quarterly meeting on August 22, 2002 at Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle, Washington with presentations highlighting the various research specialties of the Centers; the tenth Quarterly meeting on December 5, 2002, with a topic of Occult Injuries; and the eleventh Quarterly Meeting on April 3, 2003 with papers on the injuries sustained in crashes where vehicles are mis-matched in terms of size or weight. Presentations from these meetings are available through the NHTSA website.

NHTSA plans to continue holding quarterly meetings on a regular basis to disseminate CIREN information to interested parties. This is the twelfth such meeting. The CIREN Centers will be presenting papers on a variety of research topics.

Should it be necessary to cancel the meeting due to inclement weather or to any other emergencies, a decision to cancel will be made as soon as possible and posted immediately on NHTSA's

Web site <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/>. If you do not have access to the web site, you may call the contact listed below and leave your telephone or fax number. You will be called only if the meeting is postponed or canceled.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mark Scarboro, Office of Advanced Safety Research, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 6220, Washington, DC 20590, Telephone: (202) 366-5932.

or

Holly Waller, Mercedes-Benz CIREN Center, Center for Injury Sciences, 1922 7th Avenue South—KB 110, Birmingham, Alabama 35294, Telephone (205)975-3034.

Issued on: November 6, 2003.

Raymond P. Owings,

Associate Administrator for Advanced Research and Analysis, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-28482 Filed 11-13-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2003-16473]

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 2002-2003 Mercedes Benz E-320 Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 2002-2003 Mercedes Benz E-320 passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 2002-2003 Mercedes Benz E-320 passenger cars that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is December 15, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400