

DEC 11 1997

EMPLOYER STATUS DETERMINATION
Meridian & Bigbee Railroad, L.L.C.

This is the determination of the Railroad Retirement Board regarding the status of Meridian & Bigbee Railroad Company, (M&B) as an employer under the Railroad Retirement Act (45 U.S.C. §231 et seq.) (RRA) and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. §351 et seq.) (RUIA). M&B has not previously been determined to be an employer under the RRA and the RUIA.

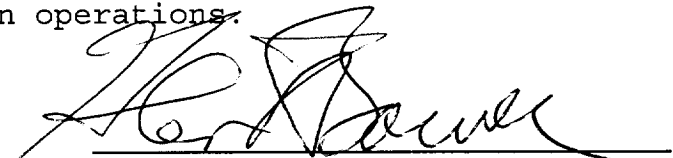
Information about M&B was furnished by Mr. Barry Parker, Director of Administration of M&B. M&B began operations on August 1, 1997. It operates approximately 51 miles of track between Meridian, Mississippi and Myrtlewood, Alabama. The M&B interchanges with CSX Transportation, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Kansas City Southern, and Norfolk Southern. The estimated traffic is approximately 25,000 carloads per year. M&B has 44 employees, who were first compensated effective August 1, 1997.


Section 1(a)(1) of the RRA defines the term "employer" to include:

- (i) any carrier by railroad subject to the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board under Part A of subtitle IV of title 49 [45 U.S.C. § 231(a)(1)(i)].

Section 1 of the RUIA (45 U.S.C. § 351) contains essentially the same definition.

The evidence establishes that M&B is a class III carrier. Accordingly, it is determined that M&B became a rail carrier employer under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts effective August 1, 1997, the date on which it first compensated employees and began operations.


Glen L. Bower


V. M. Speakman, Jr.


Jerome F. Kever