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SERVICE DATE – JANUARY 13, 2021

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No. 14)

NOTICE OF RAILROAD-SHIPPER TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY COUNCIL VACANCIES

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board (Board).

ACTION: Notice of upcoming vacancies on the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC) and solicitation of nominations.

SUMMARY: The Board hereby gives notice of vacancies on RSTAC for two small railroad representatives. The Board seeks suggestions for candidates to fill these vacancies.

DATES: Nominations are due on February 12, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Suggestions may be submitted via e-filing on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.gov>. Submissions will be posted to the Board's website under Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No. 14).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Coral Torres at (202) 245-0286. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board, created in 1996 to take over many of the functions previously performed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, exercises broad authority over transportation by rail carriers, including regulation of railroad rates and service (49 U.S.C. §§ 10701-47, 11101-24), the construction, acquisition, operation, and abandonment of rail lines (49 U.S.C. §§ 10901-07), as well as railroad line sales, consolidations, mergers, and common control arrangements (49 U.S.C. §§ 10902, 11323-27).

The ICC Termination Act of 1995 (ICCTA), enacted on December 29, 1995, established RSTAC to advise the Board's Chairman, the Secretary of Transportation, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives with respect to rail transportation policy issues RSTAC considers significant. RSTAC focuses on issues of importance to small shippers and small railroads, including car supply, rates, competition, and procedures for addressing claims. ICCTA instructs RSTAC to endeavor to develop private-sector mechanisms to prevent, or identify and address, obstacles to the most effective and efficient transportation system practicable. The members of RSTAC also prepare an annual report concerning RSTAC's activities. RSTAC is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

RSTAC's 15 appointed members consist of representatives of small and large shippers, and small and large railroads. In addition, members of the Board and the Secretary of Transportation serve as ex officio members. Of the 15 appointed members, nine are voting members and are appointed from senior executive officers of organizations engaged in the railroad and rail shipping industries. At least four of the voting members must be representatives of small shippers as determined by the Chairman, and at least four of the voting members must be representatives of Class II or III railroads. The remaining six members to be appointed—three representing Class I railroads and three representing large shipper organizations—serve in a nonvoting, advisory capacity, but may participate in RSTAC deliberations.

Meetings of RSTAC are required by statute to be held at least semi-annually. RSTAC typically holds meetings quarterly at the Board's headquarters in Washington, D.C., although some meetings are held in other locations. During the coronavirus pandemic, RSTAC has been holding virtual meetings weekly and now bi-weekly with the Board Members and the Federal Railroad Administration Administrator to report on the status of rail service and operations.

The members of RSTAC receive no compensation for their services and are required to provide for the expenses incidental to their service, including travel expenses. Currently, RSTAC members have elected to submit annual dues to pay for RSTAC expenses.

RSTAC members must be citizens of the United States and represent as broadly as practicable the various segments of the railroad and rail shipper industries. They may not be full-time employees of the United States. According to revised guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget, it is permissible for federally registered lobbyists to serve on advisory committees, such as RSTAC, as long as they do so in a representative capacity, rather than an individual capacity. See Revised Guidance on Appointment of Lobbyists to Fed. Advisory Comms., Bds., & Comm'ns, 79 Fed. Reg. 47,482 (Aug. 13, 2014). Members of RSTAC are appointed to serve in a representative capacity.

Each RSTAC member is appointed for a term of three years. A member may serve after the expiration of his or her term until a successor has taken office. No member will be eligible to serve in excess of two consecutive terms.

Due to the expiration of two small railroad representatives' second terms, the Board is seeking to fill those RSTAC positions. Suggestions for candidates to fill the vacancies should be submitted in letter form, identifying the name of the candidate, providing a summary of why the candidate is qualified to serve on RSTAC, and containing a representation that the candidate is willing to serve as an RSTAC member effective immediately upon appointment. RSTAC candidate suggestions should be filed with the Board by February 12, 2021. Members selected to serve on RSTAC are chosen at the discretion of the Board Chairman. Please note that submissions will be posted on the Board's website under Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No. 14) and can also be obtained by contacting the Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance at RCPA@stb.gov or (202) 245-0238.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. § 1325.

Decided: January 8, 2021.

By the Board, Allison C. Davis, Director, Office of Proceedings.