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SERVICE DATE – JULY 15, 2026

OCC

FR-4915-01-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36942]

State of Ohio—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—in Ashtabula and
Trumbull Counties, Ohio

The State of Ohio (the State), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 for after-the-fact authority to acquire ownership of and operating rights over an approximately 43.2-mile rail line known as USRA Line No. 714, extending between milepost 81.1 near North Warren, Ohio, and milepost 124.3 near Ashtabula, Ohio (the Line).

According to the verified notice, the Line was originally part of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, later Penn Central Transportation Company, and was acquired by the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority (ORTA) in 1981. The verified notice indicates that title was registered in the name of the State and that the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC), a successor to ORTA, currently preserves and maintains the Line for the State. Neither ORTA nor the State obtained authority from the Interstate Commerce Commission at the time of acquisition, and in Ohio Rail Development Commission—Petition for Declaratory Order, FD 36822, slip op. at 9 (STB served Mar. 30, 2026), the Board directed ORDC to seek after-the-fact authority for acquisition of the Line or explain why it believes such authority is not required.

The State certifies that the proposed acquisition of the Line does not involve an

interchange commitment. The State further certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction are not expected to exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier.

The earliest this transaction may be consummated is July 29, 2026, the effective date of the exemption (30 days after the verified notice was filed).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions for stay must be filed no later than July 22, 2026 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36942, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing on the Board's website or in writing addressed to 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on the State's representative, Crystal M. Zorbaugh, Mullins Law Group PLLC, 2001 L Street, NW, Suite 720, Washington, DC 20036.

According to the State, this action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c) and from historic preservation reporting requirements under 49 CFR 1105.8(b).

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

Decided: July 10, 2026.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.