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KB

July 21, 2009

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Mr. Kenneth Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-00001

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35218
Meridian Southern Railway, LLC—Construction of Connecting Track Exemption—
In Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

Per your request, Meridian Southern Railway, LLC ("MDS") is providing additional information regarding potential impacts of the proposed construction of approximately 1,910 feet of connecting railroad track (the "Subject Line") in the City of Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi. Specifically, the additional information is analyses of the potential traffic and noise impacts of the proposed construction.

On the issue of potential traffic impacts, I enclose a letter from Mr. J. Phillip Garrett, Project Engineer with Engineering Plus, summarizing the potential motor vehicle traffic impacts of the proposed construction. Also enclosed is a support letter from Mr. Jimmy D. Ivy, Area Manager of APAC-Mississippi, Inc., the only entity that uses the approximately 0.4-mile-long Interchange Road. On the issue of potential noise impacts, I enclose a letter from Mr. Eric Lee, President and CEO of MDS, which includes a noise analysis using the Federal Railroad Administration noise model. You will see that as previously provided in the Verified Notice of Exemption filed in the above-referenced docket, MDS expects there to

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be minimal adverse traffic and noise impacts to the area as a result of the proposed connecting track.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Sheng', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jamie Sheng
Attorney for Meridian Southern Railway, LLC

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Vicki Rutson, SEA (w/encls.)

Engineering Plus

Planning • Surveying • Testing • Landscape Design

July 21, 2009

Mr. Eric Lee
Meridian Southern Railway, LLC
415 Woodland Road
Syracuse, NY 13219

RE: INTERCHANGE ROAD TRAFFIC STUDY
Meridian Southern Railway Connection – Meridian, MS

Mr. Lee:

As you are well aware, the Meridian Southern Railway is planning to construct a railroad connection spur between the existing Meridian Southern Railway and the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The proposed spur will include an at-grade crossing at Interchange Road in Meridian, Mississippi. Due to this road crossing, we understand the Surface Transportation Board has requested a traffic study for the proposed crossing location on Interchange Road.

There are several key items I should point out to fully understand the proposed construction as it will affect the project area:

- Interchange Road is a paved city street belonging to the City of Meridian. Interchange Road is paved and maintained by the City of Meridian Public Works Department for approximately 0.4 miles.
- The paved city street terminates into the property of APAC-Mississippi, which also happens to be the only commercial business located on Interchange Road.
- APAC-Mississippi has recently relocated their main operations. The APAC location on Interchange Road is currently used only for their Meridian Administrative Office and a mechanic's shop.
- There is no residential housing located on Interchange Road.
- There are no churches, schools, health-care facilities or other public buildings located on Interchange Road.

We routinely work with APAC-Mississippi on construction projects in this area. As such, the attached letter was submitted at our request to ensure APAC was aware of the proposed construction. Further, APAC-Mississippi has provided us with the following information for their typical anticipated daily traffic rates:

- Average (normal) daily traffic for the Interchange Road APAC-Mississippi location is approximately 50 vehicles.
- Maximum daily traffic for the Interchange Road APAC-Mississippi location is approximately 100 vehicles.

We believe the information presented herein is sufficient to proceed with continued planning. Due to the circumstances and the specifics of the project area, we feel the information above should be acceptable in lieu of a formal traffic study.

MDS consulted with the City of Meridian regarding the proposed construction, and Meridian did not raise any issues regarding potential traffic impacts on Interchange Road. Similarly, the only entity that uses Interchange Road, APAC-Mississippi, supports the proposed construction.

Approximately two trains, each containing two locomotives and an average of 11 cars, will move at speeds of 10 mph or less during the daytime hours over the Subject Line and across the Interchange Road grade crossing each operating day, for a total of approximately 450 trains moving over the Subject Line each year. As described above, on average 50 vehicles per day traverse Interchange Road with a maximum average daily traffic figure of approximately 100 vehicles. The proposed construction will result in a minimal delay twice per MDS operating day to the small amounts of traffic that use Interchange Road.

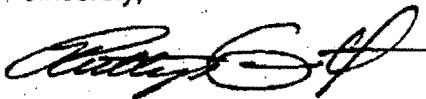
The amount of delay to vehicles is determined by the length of the train, the speed of the train, and the width of the intersection. Each locomotive and car will average approximately 65 feet long, meaning the average two locomotive and 11 car train will total approximately 845 feet in length. The intersection with Interchange Road is approximately 30 feet wide. Each train will travel through the crossing at a maximum speed of 10 mph, or 14.66 feet per second. Therefore, the average MDS train will clear the crossing in approximately 60 seconds. Assuming a small amount of fixed time for a vehicle to stop prior to the train entering the crossing and for the vehicle to continue once the train has cleared the crossing, the average delay for a vehicle approaching the proposed Interchange Road crossing when an MDS train arrives would total less than 90 seconds.

MDS proposes to stop any trains planning to enter the crossing should an emergency response vehicle need to pass through Interchange Road in order to reach the APAC-Mississippi property. Furthermore, emergency vehicles may access APAC-Mississippi property alternatively through the Norfolk Southern rail yard that lies immediately to the north of APAC-Mississippi.

In sum, the proposed construction will result in minimal and infrequent motor vehicle delays as a result of a grade crossing over an extremely lightly-trafficked road used almost exclusively by a business that actively supports the proposed construction.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call anytime. Thank you for allowing us to assist you in this project.

Sincerely,



J. Phillip Garrett, E.I., S.I.
Project Engineer

Enclosure



APAC-Mississippi, Inc.

P. O. Box 24508
Jackson, MS 39225-4508
Tel: 601 376-4000

July 10, 2009

Meridian Southern Railway

Dear Sir:

We are aware of the future railroad spur improvements located across Interchange Road. It is my understanding that during construction, ingress and egress will be maintained at all times due to our company needing access at all times. If these criteria are met, APAC-Miss., Inc. should not have any problems with the construction improvements to be made at the spur and we look forward to it.

Sincerely,

Jimmy D. Ivy
Area Manager

Safety First *Always*

MERIDIAN SOUTHERN RAILWAY, LLC

July 21, 2009

Mr. Kenneth Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-00001

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35218
Meridian Southern Railway, LLC—Construction of Connecting Track Exemption—In
Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

Pursuant to the class exemption at 49 C.F.R. § 1150.36 for the construction of connecting track, Meridian Southern Railway, LLC ("MDS") previously filed a Verified Notice of Exemption from 49 U.S.C. § 10901 for the proposed construction and has provided the Surface Transportation Board (the "Board") and its Section of Environmental Analysis ("SEA") with a Combined Environmental and Historic Report in compliance with 49 C.F.R. Part 1105. Per your request, MDS is providing this additional information regarding potential noise impacts of the proposed construction of approximately 1,910 feet of connecting railroad track (the "Subject Line") in the City of Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi.

Operations and the Surrounding Area

The Subject Line will extend from the existing MDS chip lead track near Interchange Road to a yard track (designated Number 4 track) in the existing Norfolk Southern ("NS") rail yard near NS milepost 3.2 in Meridian, Mississippi. The Subject Line will be located on what is now an empty field in an industrial area surrounded by an active rail yard, two busy rail lines, and two Interstate Highways. The Subject Line will not traverse any residential communities. Approximately two trains will move during the daytime hours over the Subject Line each operating day, for a total of approximately 450 trains each year. MDS does not anticipate moving any trains over the Subject Line at night.

To the immediate north of the proposed connection between the Subject Line and the NS yard track (at the northern end of the Subject Line) is an active NS freight rail yard running on a southwest-to-northeast axis. The rail yard contains four to five parallel NS yard tracks and the NS main line extending southwest to New Orleans, Louisiana, and northeast to Birmingham, Alabama. This NS main line hosts Amtrak passenger service as well as numerous NS freight movements daily. The proposed NS Crescent Corridor project will provide capital improvements to this NS main line, allowing for additional train capacity. Immediately to the north of the NS main track is the Kansas City Southern Railway Company ("KCS") Meridian Speedway main track and a siding. The KCS main track extends southwest to Dallas, Texas via

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Jackson, Mississippi and northeast to Corinth, Tennessee. The KCS main line at this location is the subject of the Meridian Speedway joint venture between NS and KCS that has made substantial capital improvements to the 320-mile KCS line between Meridian and Shreveport, Louisiana. Upon completion of the Meridian Speedway improvements, KCS anticipates 45 trains will traverse this line each day. In addition to the numerous freight movements along the NS and KCS main lines, NS and KCS also occasionally use their respective yard tracks and siding to park trains.

Approximately 900 feet to the southwest of the proposed connection between the Subject Line and the NS yard track, the NS main line and yard tracks and the KCS Meridian Speedway all cross 49th Avenue South at a public highway-rail grade crossing. The numerous NS and KCS trains traversing this crossing every day sound locomotive horns in compliance with Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") regulations.

No schools, libraries, hospitals, retirement communities or nursing homes are located in the vicinity of the Subject Line. A small community of private homes begins approximately 200 feet north of the connection between the Subject Line and the NS yard track. The community extends from that point further north roughly using the NS main line and yard tracks and the KCS Meridian Speedway and siding as a southern boundary. This community lies approximately 200 feet north of the 49th Avenue South grade crossing.

Approximately 600 feet west of the northern end of the Subject Line is the Lauderdale County Farm Supply and Garden Center, with access from 49th Avenue South. Approximately 1,000 feet south of the southern end of the Subject Line is the combined Interstate 59 and Interstate 20. Approximately 700 feet east of the northern end of the Subject Line are the administrative building and mechanical shop of APAC-Mississippi, Inc., an asphalt company.

Potential Noise Impacts

The Subject Line will have one public highway-rail grade crossing located at Interchange Road near the southern end. Interchange Road is a paved two-lane road owned and maintained by the City of Meridian. Interchange Road begins approximately 700 feet to the west of the Subject Line at an intersection with 49th Avenue South and continues to a dead end point approximately 800 feet to the east of the Subject Line at the property of APAC-Mississippi, Inc. There are no driveways, structures, houses, sheds, or public buildings along Interchange Road.

There is currently one public highway-rail grade crossing maintained by MDS that is located approximately 300 feet west of the proposed grade crossing. This current grade crossing has not been used in three to four years, and the track on the north side of the current grade crossing was removed approximately nine years ago. The current grade crossing is partially paved over. As a result of the proposed construction and the new grade crossing at Interchange Road, MDS will completely close the current grade crossing. The new grade crossing will not feature a wayside horn.

Pursuant to FRA regulations at 49 C.F.R. Part 222 and § 229.129, MDS plans to sound a locomotive horn when its locomotives approach and pass through the proposed grade crossing at Interchange Road. Safety is a priority for MDS and sounding of the locomotive horn will

promote safety at the proposed grade crossing. In order to determine the maximum impact zone of noise from these locomotive horns, MDS completed an FRA Grade Crossing Noise Model (the "Noise Model," attached hereto as Exhibit A).

MDS anticipates running one train per operating day over the Subject Line during daytime hours. This train will traverse the crossing once in each direction. Each train will operate feature two locomotives with front-mounted horns and an average of 11 cars traveling at a top speed of 10 mph. MDS used these figures in running the Noise Model. To the extent information was not available or known, MDS selected the most conservative variables for the Noise Model inputs to yield the largest noise impact zones. For example, MDS will comply with FRA regulations requiring the locomotive horn to begin to be sounded at least 15 seconds but no more than 20 seconds before the locomotive enters the crossing. See 49 C.F.R. § 221.21(b)(2). In the "Length of Impact Area" category of the Noise Model, MDS utilized "20 seconds," the maximum allowable time before the locomotive enters the crossing. Similarly, MDS will comply with FRA regulations requiring each lead locomotive to be equipped with a locomotive horn that produces a minimum sound level of 96 dB(A) and a maximum sound level of 110 dB(A) at 100 feet forward of the locomotive in its direction of travel. See 49 C.F.R. § 229.129. In the "Horn Lmax dB(A) @ 100 feet" category of the Noise Model, MDS entered "110 dB(A)," the maximum allowable locomotive horn sound level. In the "Non Train Noise Environment" category, MDS conservatively entered "Rural" (45 dBA Ldn), although MDS believes that the ambient noise in the affected area without MDS horn blowing may be higher, due to frequent NS and KCS train traffic and locomotive horns and other light industry in the surrounding area.

The Noise Model generates three distinct outputs: (1) the 65 Ldn Contour dimensions, (2) the Impact Zone dimensions, and (3) the Severe Impact Zone dimensions. The 65 Ldn Contour figure identifies the area in which the noise environment will reach 65 dBA as a result of MDS horn blowing at the Interchange Road crossing. The Impact and Severe Impact Zone figures identify the area in which the MDS horn blowing will cause both an "impact" and a "severe impact" in terms that are both "relative" (to existing noise levels) and "absolute" (a fixed level independent of existing noise levels).¹

The Noise Model generated a "Zone Length" of 200 feet and a "Half Zone Length" of 100 feet for all three outputs. MDS understands this to mean that the noise impact of MDS horn blowing would extend along the Subject Line for 200 feet north and 200 feet south of the proposed crossing, while the noise impact would gradually taper off from the point of the crossing to 100 feet north and 100 feet south of the proposed crossing.

The Noise Model generated a 65 Ldn Contour of 127 feet at the proposed crossing and of 89 feet at "Half Zone Length." FRA describes these figures as "the distance perpendicular to the tracks to the Ldn 65 contour" at the crossing and at the "halfway point of the horn zone." MDS understands this to mean that the 65 Ldn Contour would extend 127 feet in width to the east and west of the Subject Line at the proposed crossing, tapering gradually from 127 feet wide at the

¹ See FRA, "Horn Noise Questions and Answers," Oct. 31, 2008, <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/1173>.

crossing to 89 feet wide at 100 feet to the north and south of the crossing, and would extend 89 feet wide from 100 to 200 feet to the north and south of the crossing.

The Noise Model generated a Severe Impact Zone of 260 feet at the proposed crossing and of 193 feet at "Half Zone Length." FRA describes these figures as "the distance perpendicular to the tracks to . . . severe impact" at the crossing and at the "halfway point of the horn zone." MDS understands this to mean that the Severe Impact Zone would extend 260 feet in width to the east and west of the Subject Line at the proposed crossing, tapering gradually from 260 feet wide at the crossing to 193 feet wide at 100 feet to the north and south of the crossing, and would extend 193 feet wide from 100 to 200 feet to the north and south of the crossing.

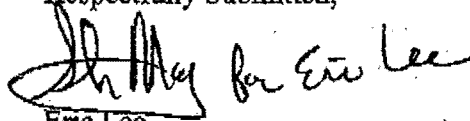
The Noise Model generated an Impact Zone of 510 feet at the proposed crossing and of 394 feet at "Half Zone Length." FRA describes these figures as "the distance perpendicular to the tracks to impact" at the crossing and at the "halfway point of the horn zone." MDS understands this to mean that the Severe Impact Zone would extend 510 feet in width to the east and west of the Subject Line at the proposed crossing, tapering gradually from 510 feet wide at the crossing to 394 feet wide at 100 feet to the north and south of the crossing, and would extend 394 feet wide from 100 to 200 feet to the north and south of the crossing.

The nearest boundary of the closest residential community, described above, is located approximately 1,500 feet north of the proposed Interchange Road grade crossing, well outside of the 65 Ldn Contour, the Severe Impact Zone, and the Impact Zone. In between the proposed grade crossing and the residential community lies the NS freight rail yard with four to five NS yard tracks, the NS main line, the KCS Meridian Speedway, and a KCS siding. This residential community is also located approximately 300 feet north of the very active 49th Avenue South NS/KCS grade crossing, described above. Even using conservative assumptions in the FRA Noise Model, the Model shows that noise from MDS train operations likely will have no adverse impact on this residential community. There are no other noise-sensitive receptors in the immediate vicinity.

MDS does not anticipate that operations over the Subject Line will create significant "wheel squeal." The two curves along the Subject Line measure approximately 13 and 14 degrees, respectfully, and MDS proposes to move trains over the Subject Line at speeds of 10 mph or less. MDS proposes to connect the Subject Line to the MDS chip lead track at the Subject Line's southern end and to a yard track in the existing NS rail yard at the Subject Line's northern end with Number 8 or 10 turnouts. Due to these gradual curves and low speeds, MDS does not anticipate that locomotives running over the Subject Line will generate the significant outward pressure on the outside rail that would cause "wheel squeal."

MDS consulted with the City of Meridian regarding the proposed construction, and Meridian did not raise any issues regarding potential noise impacts to any of its communities.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Lee" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Lee

President and CEO, Meridian Southern Railway, LLC

Enclosure

CC: Victoria Rutson, SEA

EXHIBIT A
FRA Grade Crossing Noise Model

FRA Grade Crossing Noise Model

User Input	
Noise Situation (Pick from List)	2
Horn Lmax (dBA) @ 100 feet	110
Horn Location on Locomotive(Pick from List)	2
Non Train Noise Environment (pick from list)	3
Shielding (Pick from List)	5
Length of Impact Area (pick from list)	2
Existing Train Speed (mph)	10
Future Train Speed (mph)	10
Number of Existing Trains in one Direction	0
Number of Future Trains in one Direction	2
Existing Number of Day Trains (7 am to 10 p.m.)	0
Future Number of Day Trains (7 am to 10 p.m.)	2
Existing Number of Night Trains (10 p.m. to 7 am)	0
Future Number of Night Trains (10 p.m. to 7 am)	0
Existing Average Number of Cars	11
Future Average Number of Cars	11
Existing Average Number of Locomotives	2
Future Average Number of Locomotives	2

Noise Situation	
Horns Existing and Future	1
Horns in Future Only	2
No Horns Existing and Future	3

Horn Location on Locomotive	
National Average (50% front, 50% middle)	1
All Front Mounted	2
All Middle Mounted	3
User Defined	4

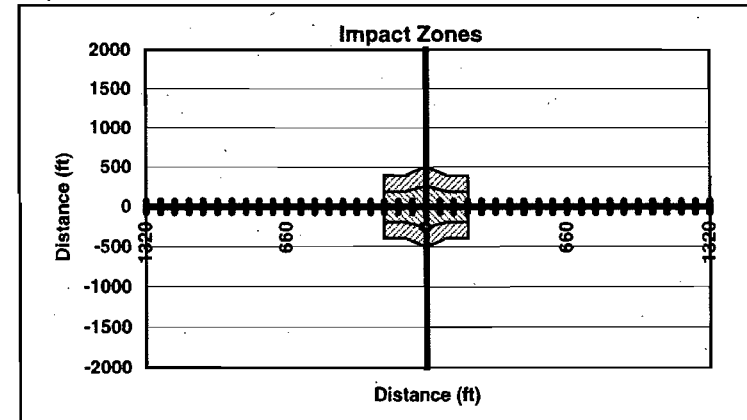
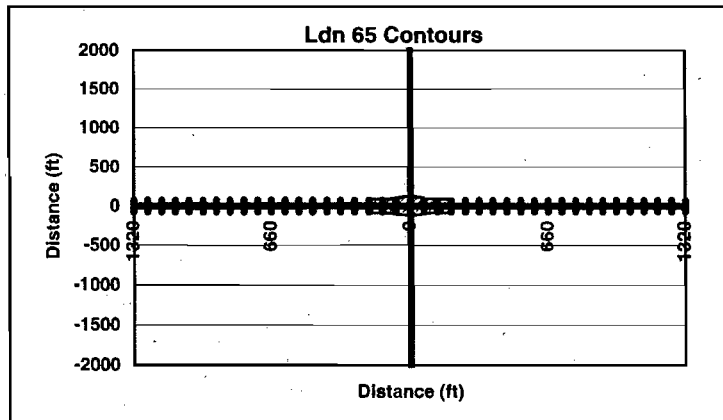
Non Train Noise Environment	
Urban	1
Suburban	2
Rural	3
User Defined Ldn =	4

Shielding	
Dense Urban	1
Light Urban	2
Dense Suburban	3
Light Suburban	4
Rural	5
No Shielding	6

Length of Impact Area	
1/4 mile	1
20 seconds	2
15 seconds	3

Ldn 65 Contours Numeric Output (in feet)	
Existing 65 Ldn Contour at X-ing	0
Future 65 Ldn Contour at X-ing	127
Existing 65 Ldn Contour at 1/2 zone length	0
Future 65 Ldn Contour at 1/2 zone length	89
Zone Length	200
1/2 Zone Length	100

Impact Zones Numeric Output (in feet)	
Impact Distance at X-ing	510
Severe Impact Distance at X-ing	260
Impact Distance at 1/2 zone length	394
Severe Impact Distance at 1/2 zone length	193
Zone Length	200
1/2 Zone Length	100



Instruction sheet for using the FRA horn noise model.

Cells in Blue are inputs.
Cells in Green are lookup tables.
Cells in Yellow are output.

Only cells in blue can be changed. The rest of the spreadsheet is locked and is not to be altered by the user. The four cells in dark blue can be changed, but they contain formulas critical to the operation of the spreadsheet. If they are changed, do not save the spreadsheet (or save it under a different name) or the formulas will be lost. Note that the spreadsheet may take a few seconds to update after any changes to the input (especially with slower computers).

- 1 Noise Situation: Use the lookup table to specify the horn sounding condition of interest.
- 2 Horn Lmax: The maximum A-weighted sound level of the train horn at 100 feet from the front of the train. If your Lmax is not at 100 feet, use the following converter to get the Lmax at 100 feet.
Your Lmax dBA
Your distance feet
Lmax at 100 feet dBA
- 3 Horn Location on Locomotive: Use the lookup table to specify the location of the horns on the locomotives. There are 4 options:
 - 1 National average. Use this if the mix of horns is not known. It represents the national average of several thousand locomotives.
 - 2 All front mounted: All the horns are located at the front of the locomotive.
 - 3 All middle mounted: All the horns are mounted in the middle of the locomotive.
 - 4 User defined percentage: If there is detailed knowledge about the horn location mix, use this and input the percentage of the front mounted horns in the blue input box in the lookup table.
- 4 Non Train Noise Environment: This represents the noise environment without any train noise (the background noise). Use the lookup table to determine the type of noise environment. A specific noise environment can be input, if the data is available. The values used for the non train noise environment are as follows:
Urban: 65 dBA Ldn
Suburban: 55 dBA Ldn
Rural: 45 dBA Ldn
- 5 Shielding: Use the lookup table to specify the type of shielding by the type of area where the grade crossing is located. Near grade crossings, shielding is generally provided by rows of buildings. Using no shielding is not recommended.
- 6 Length of Impact Area: This determines the length of the impact area along the tracks. The default is 1/4 mile. The 20 second and 15 second options calculate the distance based on the speed of the train, up to a maximum of 1/4 mile for higher speed trains.
- 7 Train Speed: The speed of the train, in miles per hour. There are separate entries for existing and future trains.
- 8 Existing and future numbers of Trains: Use this to input the number of trains at the crossing. You should input the number of trains in one direction only, do not sum both directions. The split between day and night trains assumes an even distribution over the entire 24 hours of the day. Night is considered to be 10 pm to 7 am and day is 7 am to 10 pm. The user can input specific numbers for the day and night trains in the dark blue boxes if the split is not uniform (for commuter rail systems, as an example), but do not save the spreadsheet (or save it as a different name) or the formulas in those boxes will be lost. If you do lose the formulas, the following are the formulas you should use in those four cells.
Cell C14: +C12*15/24
Cell C15: +C13*15/24
Cell C16: +C12*9/24
Cell C17: +C13*9/24
- 9 Number of Cars: Enter the average number of cars, for both the existing and future cases.
- 10 Number of Locomotives: Enter the average number of locomotives, for both the existing and future cases.
- 11 Numeric Output: These two tables give the numeric output of the program. All distances are in feet.

Ldn 65 Contours Numeric Output: The first two numbers represent the distance perpendicular to the tracks to the Ldn 65 contour at the crossing, for both the existing and future conditions. The next two numbers represent the distance perpendicular to the tracks to the Ldn 65 contour at the halfway point of the horn zone. The final two numbers represent the distances along the track that define the half and full impact zone lengths.

Impact Zones Numeric Output: The first two numbers represent the distance perpendicular to the tracks to impact and severe impact at the crossing. The next two numbers represent the distance perpendicular to the tracks to the impact and severe impact at the halfway point of the horn zone. The final two numbers represent the distances along the track that define the half and full impact zone lengths.
- 12 Graphs: The graphs provide a visual means of comparing changes in the input parameters. Both scales remain constant, so you can do relative comparisons.

The Ldn 65 graph shows the existing (in blue) and the future (in red) Ldn 65 contours for the data provided by the user.

The Impact graph shows the impact (in blue) and the severe impact (in red) for the data provided by the user.



"Denton, Peter W."
<Peter.Denton@klgates.com>
>

07/21/2009 05:53 PM

To <Kenneth.Blodgett@stb.dot.gov>
cc <rutsonv@stb.dot.gov>, "Sheng, Janie C. I."
<Janie.Sheng@klgates.com>
bcc

Subject STB Finance Docket No. 35218 - Meridian Southern
Railway, LLC

Ken,

Per your discussion with my colleague Janie Sheng, attached is additional information on potential noise and traffic impacts for Meridian Southern Railway, LLC's proposed construction of connecting track. My contact information is listed below, please feel free to call or email me with any questions.

Regards,
Peter

Peter W. Denton*

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* Admitted to practice in Maryland only; not admitted in the District of Columbia. Supervised by Kevin Sheys, member of the District of Columbia bar.

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