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THOMAS F. McFARLAND

July 20, 2004

By electronic mail

Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit, Suite 713
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: STB Ex Parte No. 647, *Class Exemption for Expedited Abandonment Procedure for Class II and Class III Railroads*

Dear Mr. Williams:

The subject of the above proceeding is a Petition for Rulemaking filed in behalf of 65 shortline and regional rail carriers (65 carriers) on May 15, 2003. At a Board voting conference on June 22, 2004, Chairman Nober announced that the Board would hold a public hearing in this proceeding on August 11, 2004. Formal notice of that hearing has not yet been issued.

The Class III rail carriers listed below desire to participate in the public hearing in support of the relief sought in the Petition. Those rail carriers are represented by the undersigned. However, inasmuch as those carriers support the position of the 65 carriers, the undersigned and Mark H. Sidman, Esq., attorney for the 65 carriers, have agreed that Mr. Sidman will make an oral presentation jointly in behalf of the Class III rail carriers listed below and the 65 carriers.

The participating Class III rail carriers are:

Denver Rock Island Railroad Company
Heart of Georgia Railroad, Inc.
Iowa Traction Railroad Company
Minnesota Commercial Railway Company
Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.
Mississippi & Tennessee Railroad, Inc.
NEBKOTA Railway, Inc.

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Progressive Rail Incorporated
Railroad Switching Service of Missouri, Inc.
Rio Valley Switching Company
Winamac Southern Railroad Company

Very truly yours,

/s/

Thomas F. McFarland
*Attorney for above-named
Class III rail carriers*

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cc: Mark H. Sidman, Esq., *by e-mail and first-class mail*