

will be announced in the **Federal Register** at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Attendance is open to all and does not require advanced registration nor advanced notification to RSPA. We specifically want that segment of the pipeline industry involved with in-line inspection to be aware of the status of this contract. To assure that the industry is well represented at these meetings, we have invited the major domestic in-line inspection company (Tuboscope-Vetco Pipeline Services) and the following pipeline industry trade associations: American Petroleum Institute, Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, and the American Gas Association. Each has named an engineering/technical representative.

II. The Contract

The Battelle contract is a research and development contract to evaluate and develop in-line inspection technologies for detecting mechanical damage and cracking, such as stress-corrosion cracking (SCC), in natural gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Third-party mechanical damage is one of the largest causes of pipeline failure, but existing in-line inspection tools cannot always detect or accurately characterize the severity of some types of third-party damage that can threaten pipeline integrity. Although SCC is not very common on pipelines, it usually appears in high-stressed, low-population-density areas and only when a limited set of environmental conditions are met. Several attempts have been made to develop an in-line inspection tool for SCC, but there is no commercially successful tool on the market.

Under the contract, Battelle will evaluate and advance magnetic flux leakage (MFL) inspection technology for detecting mechanical damage and two electromagnetic technologies for detecting SCC. The focus is on MFL for mechanical damage because experience shows MFL can characterize some types of mechanical damage and can be successfully used for metal-loss corrosion under a wide variety of conditions. The focus for SCC is on electromagnetic technologies that can be used in conjunction with, or as a modification to, MFL tools. The technologies to be evaluated take advantage of the MFL magnetizer either by enhancing signals or using electrical currents that are generated by the passage of an inspection tool through a pipeline.

The contract includes two major tasks during the base two years of the

contract. Task 1 is to evaluate existing MFL signal generation and analysis methods to establish a baseline from which today's tools can be evaluated and tomorrow's advances measured. Then, it will develop improvements to signal analysis methods and verify them through testing under realistic pipeline conditions. Finally, it will build an experience base and defect sets to generalize the results from individual tools and analysis methods to the full range of practical applications.

Task 2 is to evaluate two inspection technologies for detecting stress corrosion cracks. The focus in Task 2 is on electromagnetic techniques that have been developed in recent years and that could be used on or as a modification to existing MFL tools. Three subtasks will evaluate velocity-induced remote-field techniques, remote-field eddy-current techniques, and external techniques for sizing stress corrosion cracks.

A Task 3 is being considered for an option year to the contract. Task 3, if done, will verify the results from Tasks 1 and 2 by tests under realistic pipeline conditions. Task 3 will (1) extend the mechanical damage detection, signal decoupling, and sizing algorithms developed in the basic program to include the effects of pressure, (2) verify the algorithms under pressurized conditions in GRI's 4,700 foot, 24-inch diameter Pipeline Simulation Facility (PSF) flow loop, and (3) evaluate the use of eddy-current techniques for characterizing cold working within mechanical damage.

A drawback of present pig technology is the lack of a reliable pig performance verification procedure that is generally accepted by the pipeline industry and RSPA. The experience gained by the pipeline industry and RSPA with the use of the PSF flow loop in this project will provide a framework to develop procedures for evaluating pig performance. Defect detection reliability is critical if instrumented pigging is to be used as an in-line inspection tool in pipeline industry risk management programs.

The ultimate benefits of the project could be more efficient and cost-effective operations, maintenance programs to monitor and enhance the safety of gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Pipeline companies will benefit from having access to inspection technologies for detecting critical mechanical damage and stress-corrosion cracks. Inspection tool vendors will benefit by understanding where improvements are beneficial and needed. These benefits will support RSPA's long-range

objective of ensuring the safety and reliability of the gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline infrastructure.

Issued in Washington, D. C. on June 25, 1997.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.
[FR Doc. 97-17170 Filed 6-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-508X]

Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County—Abandonment Exemption—in King County, WA

On June 11, 1997, The Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County (TLC) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903-05¹ to abandon a line of railroad known as the Sammamish or Issaquah Branch, extending from milepost 7.30 near Redmond to the end of the line at milepost 19.75 in Issaquah, which traverses U.S. Postal Service ZIP Codes 98027, 98029, 98052 and 98053, a distance of 12.45 miles, in King County, WA. TLC has indicated that there are no stations on the line.

TLC states that the line contains approximately 1 mile of federally granted right-of-way. Any documentation in TLC's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

In this proceeding, TLC is proposing to abandon a line that constitutes its entire rail system. In issuing abandonment authority for a railroad line that constitutes the carrier's entire system, the Board does not impose labor protection, except in specifically enumerated circumstances. *See Northampton and Bath R. Co.—Abandonment*, 354 I.C.C. 784, 785-86 (1978) (*Northampton*). Therefore, if the Board grants the petition for exemption, in the absence of a showing that one or more of the exceptions articulated in *Northampton* are present, under Board policy no labor protective conditions would be imposed.

¹ TLC seeks exemptions from the offer of financial assistance (OFA) requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10904 and the public use requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10905. Exemptions from 49 U.S.C. 10904-05 have been granted from time to time, but only when the right-of-way is needed for a valid public purpose and there is no overriding public need for continued rail service.

By issuing this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by September 29, 1997.

Unless an exemption is granted, as sought, from the OFA provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10904, any OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$900 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 and any request for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than July 21, 1997. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).²

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-508X and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Charles H. Montange, 426 NW 162d Street, Seattle, WA 98177.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Any other persons who would like to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS) may contact SEA. EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Decided: June 23, 1997.

²TLC submits, as Exhibit A to its petition, a trail use request executed by King County Department of Parks and Recreation (King County Parks). Because King County Parks is a state government entity, the filing fee is waived. 49 CFR 1002.2(e)(1).

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-17149 Filed 6-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Fiscal Service

Renegotiation Board Interest Rate; Prompt Payment Interest Rate; Contract Disputes Act

AGENCY: Bureau of the Public Debt,
Fiscal Service, Treasury.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: For the period beginning July 1, 1997 and ending on December 31, 1997, the prompt payment interest rate is 6.75% (6¾ per centum) per annum.

ADDRESSES: Comments or inquiries may be mailed to Cynthia Winters, Team Leader, Debt Accounting Branch, Office of Public Debt Accounting, Bureau of the Public Debt, Parkersburg, West Virginia, 26106-1328. A copy of this Notice will be made available for downloading from the <http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov>.

DATES: This notice announces the interest rate applicable for the July 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997 period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie Brown, Debt Accounting Branch Manager, Office of Public Debt Accounting, Bureau of the Public Debt, Parkersburg, West Virginia, 26106-1328, (304) 480-5171, Cynthia Winters, Team Leader, Debt Accounting Branch, Office of Public Debt Accounting, Bureau of the Public Debt, (304) 480-5174, or Elizabeth S. Gracia, Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Chief Counsel, Bureau of the Public Debt, (304) 480-5198.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Although the Renegotiation Board is no longer in existence, other Federal Agencies are required to use interest rates computed under the criteria established by the Renegotiation Act of 1971 Section 2, Public Law 92-41, 85 Stat. 97. For example, the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 Sec. 12, Public Law 95-563, 92 Stat. 2389 and the Prompt Payment Act of 1982 Section 2, Public Law 97-177, 96 Stat. 85 provide for the calculation of interest due on claims at a rate established by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3902(a).

Therefore, notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the above mentioned sections, the Secretary of the Treasury has determined that the rate of interest applicable for the purpose of said

sections, for the period beginning July 1, 1997 and ending on December 31, 1997, is 6¾ per centum per annum.

Dated: June 26, 1997.

Donald V. Hammond,

Deputy Fiscal Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-17307 Filed 6-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-39-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Fiscal Service

AGENCY: Financial Management Service,
Fiscal Service, Department of the
Treasury.

ACTION: Surety Companies Acceptable
on Federal Bonds Termination of
Authority: Christiania General
Insurance Corporation of New York.

SUMMARY: Dept. Cir. 570, 1996-Rev.,
Supp. No. 13).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Surety Bond Branch (202) 874-6850.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that the Certificate of Authority issued by the Treasury to Christiania General Insurance Corporation of New York, of Tarrytown, New York, under the United States Code, Title 31, Sections 9304-9308, to qualify as an acceptable surety on Federal bonds is terminated effective today.

The Company was last listed as an acceptable surety on Federal bonds at 61 FR 34286, July 1, 1996.

With respect to any bonds currently in force with Christiania General Insurance Corporation of New York, bond-approving officers should secure new bonds with acceptable sureties in those instances where a significant amount of liability remains outstanding. In addition, bonds that are continuous in nature should not be renewed.

The Treasury Department Circular 570 may be viewed and downloaded through the Internet (<http://www.fms.treas.gov/c570.html>) or through our computerized public bulletin board system (FMS Inside Line) at (202) 874-6887. A hard copy may be purchased from the Government Printing Office (GPO), Subscription Service, Washington, DC, telephone (202) 512-1800. When ordering the Circular from GPO, use the following stock number: 048-000-00499-7.

Questions concerning this notice may be directed to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, Funds Management Division, Surety Bond Branch, 3700 East-West Highway, Room 6F04, Hyattsville, MD 20782.