



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

OCT 25 2013

The Honorable Howard Shelanski
Office of Management and Budget
Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Shelanski:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) anticipates publishing a notice in the Federal Register on November 6, 2013 that spells out the agency's emergency request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of the collection of information titled, Notice of Funding Availability and Solicitation of Applications for Grants under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Repair Grant Program, which is also being published in the Federal Register on November 6, 2013. FRA asks for emergency clearance for the proposed collection of information for the reasons stated below.

The program for which this Information Collection Request (ICR) is being submitted was established by Congress as part of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 110-329, September 30, 2008). The program provides \$20,000,000 for the repair and rehabilitation of Class II and Class III railroad infrastructure damaged by hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters in areas for which the President declared a major disaster after January 1, 2008, under Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974. While these funds were awarded by FRA in 2009 and 2010, several of the projects originally selected for funding under the program were completed under budget and those funds can now be used to assist other States affected by natural disasters.

Notable recent examples of such disasters include Hurricane Sandy and flooding in Colorado, which severely damaged many miles of Class II and Class III railroad infrastructure. Due to the importance of Class II and III railroads to local economies and the national freight transportation network, it is essential that FRA is able to provide the remaining funds to eligible grantees as soon as possible. Waiting the normally prescribed time period would have a negative effect on rail transportation in areas already reeling from a natural disaster and also perpetuate the negative economic impacts resulting from such a disaster.

For the reasons stated above, FRA requests a waiver of the normal clearance procedures specified in the Paperwork reduction Act of 1995 and Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1320. FRA cannot reasonably comply with these normal procedures without

considerable economic harm to affected States and Class II and Class III railroads. In these States, railroad rights-of-way, bridges, signals, and other infrastructure damaged by hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters need immediate rehabilitation and repair. In order to accomplish this goal and expedite important funding to States affected by natural disasters, FRA must have the necessary means to evaluate applications so it can properly direct these critical resources. Therefore, FRA respectfully requests that OMB grant emergency clearance for the proposed ICR by November 6, 2013 for the maximum period of 180 days, so FRA can implement this vitally important congressional program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Szabo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator