

## **Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission**

### **End-of-Year Railroad Service Outlook (Rail Fall Peak Demand Assessments)**

The Surface Transportation Board (Board) seeks approval for its annual information collection related to rail traffic demand projections. This information outlines respondent rail carriers' plans and preparations to alleviate congestion along major railroads during the peak fall period. This information is published on the Board's website for the benefit of the Board, carriers, shippers, and the general public.

#### **A. Justification**

##### **1. Need for Information**

The Board is, by statute, responsible for the economic regulation of common carrier railroads operating in the United States. The shipping community and our economy as a whole depend on reliable and efficient freight rail service. The Board and rail shippers need to understand how rail carriers plan to meet the increased demand for rail service during the fall peak demand season, including capital plans for relieving bottlenecks. For several years, the Board has asked each Class I railroad and rail carriers that are members of the American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) to provide a forward looking assessment of their ability to meet end-of-year business demands for rail service, which typically increase during the fall shipping season.

##### **2. Use of Data Collected**

The Board uses this information to monitor efforts by United States rail carriers to meet the increased fall demand for rail service.

##### **3. Reduction Through Improved Technology**

The Board will accept filing by email and fax. Respondents currently email their responses.

##### **4. Identification of Duplication**

The Board is the only agency tasked with the economic regulation of freight railroads. This information is not duplicated by any other agency.

##### **5. Minimizing Burden for Small Businesses**

In any given year, fewer than six railroads that fit the definition of "small business" typically respond to this request for voluntary informational filings. In 2013, in addition to the nation's seven class I (large) railroads, one short line holding company responded to this request. No class III (small) railroads responded. (The 2013 railroad response letters are posted on the

Board's website at <http://199.79.178.189/peakletters1.nsf/2013?OpenPage>.) In 2012, in addition to the class I railroads, one individual small railroad and two short-line holding companies responded to this request. (The railroad 2012 response letters are posted on the Board's website at <http://199.79.178.189/peakletters1.nsf/2012?OpenPage>.)

6. Frequency Reduction Consequences

Rail Fall Peak Demand Assessments are requested annually. Less frequent collection would fail to reflect current peak demand.

7. Special Circumstances

No special circumstances apply to this collection.

8. Consultation Outside Agency

The Board provided a 60-day comment period regarding this existing collection in the Federal Register notice issued on June 24, 2013, at 78 Fed. Reg. 37882. No comments were received. In addition, a 30-day Federal Register notice seeking comments from respondents is being published simultaneously with this submission. See 79 Fed. Reg. 44089 (July 29, 2014).

9. Payment or Gift

No payment or gift is made in connection with this survey form.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

This collection is posted on the Board's website.

11. Sensitive Information

This collection does not collect sensitive information.

12. Estimated Burden Hours.

The Board estimates that nine railroads (seven Class I railroads and two small railroads) will respond to its request for peak demand information. Based on feedback from a small sampling (less than 10) of respondents, the Board estimates an average hourly burden per respondent of 30.3 hours and a total annual burden of 273 hours for all carriers.

13. Non-hourly Costs to Respondents

There are no non-hourly burdens for respondents. The response letters are submitted electronically by email.

14. Annualized Cost To the Federal Government

The Board estimates the annual cost of this collection to be \$3,570, which includes the time to draft the annual request, review the incoming collection, and post the collection to the Board's website.

15. Explanation of Program Changes or Adjustments

There are no program changes or adjustments.

16. Publication of Data and/or Results

Both the Board's request letters and the rail carriers' response letters are posted on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov/PeakLetters1.nsf/2014?OpenPage>.

17. Display of Expiration date for OMB approval

The control number and expiration date will appear on the Board's letter requesting the information.

18. Exceptions to the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are sought.

**B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

Not Applicable. This collection of information does not involve statistical methods.