

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT –
QUARTERLY WAGE FORM A & B**

A. Justification:

1. (a) Why the collection is necessary. The Surface Transportation Board (Board) has broad statutory authority to provide economic regulatory oversight of railroads, addressing such matters as rates; service; the construction, acquisition, and abandonment of rail lines; carrier mergers; and interchange of traffic among carriers (49 U.S.C. §§ 10101-11908). Under 49 U.S.C. § 11145, the Board may require regulated carriers to submit financial and statistical data and reports that the Board needs to carry out its mission. For each reporting railroad, the annual and quarterly Wage Forms A & B, which are required to be filed by Class I (large) railroads pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 11145 and 49 C.F.R. pt. 1245, show the numbers of employees, service hours, and compensation by employee group (executive, professional, maintenance-of-way, maintenance-of-equipment, transportation (train and engineer), and transportation (other than train and engineer)). This information is collected on the same form (Wage Form A & B) in two phases: The Quarterly Report of Railroad Employees, Service, and Compensation; and the Annual Report of Railroad Employees, Service, and Compensation. The Board is requesting an extension without modification of this information collection, which will otherwise expire on March 31, 2025.

2. How the collection will be used. The Board uses information from this form to forecast labor costs, to measure the efficiency of the reporting railroads, and to evaluate proposed regulated transactions under 49 U.S.C. §§ 10902-03 and 11326 that may impact rail employees, such as mergers, acquisitions of control, purchases, and abandonments. Other federal agencies and industry groups, including the Railroad Retirement Board, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Association of American Railroads, depend on the information contained in these reports to monitor railroad operations.

3. Extent of automated information collection. The railroads submit this report electronically in a template provided by the agency. The template has been revised to contain all of the same data elements, but has been reformatted in a way that should allow for more efficient submission and agency processing.

4. Identification of duplication. No other federal agency has economic regulatory authority over freight rail transportation. Because no other federal agency collects the information in this report, nor is this information available from any other source, there is no duplication of information.

5. Effects on small business. No small entities will be affected by the collection of this

information. This reporting requirement applies only to Class I railroads, which have operating revenues in excess of \$1.032 billion. The threshold value for Class I railroads is based on the new thresholds established in Docket No. EP 763.

6. Impact of less frequent collections. The agency collects the quarterly and annual reports primarily for public use. Collecting both the quarterly and annual reports provides more utility to those members of the public who are interested in specific quarterly data, as well as those who work only with annual data. Therefore, the utility of the data would be diminished if collected less frequently.

7. Special circumstances. No special circumstances apply to this collection.

8. Compliance with 5 C.F.R. § 1320.8. As required, the Board published a Federal Register notice on August 5, 2024, providing a 60-day comment period regarding this collection. 89 Fed. Reg. 63459. No comments were received. During the 60-day period, agency representatives held discussions in individual meetings with three carriers (respondents) regarding the collection and the changes to the forms. As also required, a Federal Register notice providing an additional 30-day comment period is being published simultaneously with this submission. 89 Fed. Reg. 88335.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents. The Board does not provide any payment or gift to respondents.

10. Assurance of confidentiality. All information collected through this report is available to the public.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information. This collection contains no information of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimation of burden hours for respondents. The following information pertains to the estimate of burden hours associated with this collection:

(1) Number of respondents: Seven

(2) Frequency of response: Quarterly and annually

(3) Annual hour burden per respondent: Based on information provided by the railroad industry, we estimate a per-respondent-railroad burden of not more than 16 hours, which includes the time needed to gather the information, edit, review, complete, and submit the quarterly and annual reports. It is estimated that each of the seven railroad respondents requires no more than 3 hours for each of the four quarterly reports, and no more than 4 hours for the annual report. The total annual burden hours on the industry are estimated to be not more than 112 hours.

13. Other costs to respondents: No non-hour costs for operation, maintenance, or purchase of services associated with this collection have been identified. This report is

submitted to the agency electronically.

14. Estimated costs to the Board: We estimate that it takes 11 hours annually to process and review the annual and quarterly filings (GS-15), and one hour to post this report (Wage Statistics of Class I Railroads) on our website (GS-12), or approximately \$1,033 annually.

15. Changes in burden hours. No change in burden hours is requested. The Board is requesting an extension without modification. While the template format is changing, the fields collected are identical to the historical collection, so there are no anticipated changes to burden hours.

16. Plans for tabulation and publication: Reports generated from these data are posted on the Board's website at <https://prod.stb.gov/reports-data/economic-data/>.

17. Display of expiration date for OMB approval. No exception is sought. The control number and expiration date for this collection appear on the form.

18. Exceptions to Certification Statement. Not applicable

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods:

Not applicable