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the Board's NEPA process, to render initial decisions on requests for waiver or modification of any of these rules for individual proceedings, and to recommend rejection of environmental reports not in compliance with these rules. This delegated authority shall be used only in a manner consistent with Board policy. The Director may further delegate procedural authority to the Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis as appropriate. Appeals to the Board will be available as a matter of right.

[56 FR 36105, July 31, 1991, as amended at 64 FR 53268, Oct. 1, 1999]

§1105.3 Information and assistance.

Information and assistance regarding the rules and the Board's environmental and historic review process is available by writing or calling the Section of Environmental Analysis, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423.

[64 FR 53268, Oct. 1, 1999]

§1105.4 Definitions.

In addition to the definitions contained in the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR part 1508), the following definitions apply to these regulations:

(a) *Act* means the Interstate Commerce Act, Subtitle IV of Title 49, U.S. Code, as amended.

(b) *Applicant* means any person or entity seeking Board action, whether by application, petition, notice of exemption, or any other means that initiates a formal Board proceeding.

(c) *Board* means the Surface Transportation Board.

(d) *Environmental Assessment* or "EA" means a concise public document for which the Board is responsible that contains sufficient information for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement or to make a finding of no significant environmental impact.

(e) *Environmental documentation* means either an Environmental Impact Statement or an Environmental Assessment.

(f) *Environmental Impact Statement* or "EIS" means the detailed written statement required by the National En-

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vironmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c), for a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

(g) *Environmental Report* means a document filed by the applicant(s) that:

(1) Provides notice of the proposed action; and

(2) Evaluates its environmental impacts and any reasonable alternatives to the action. An environmental report may be in the form of a proposed draft Environmental Assessment or proposed draft Environmental Impact Statement.

(h) *Filing* means any request for STB authority, whether by application, petition, notice of exemption, or any other means that initiates a formal Board proceeding.

(i) *Section of Environmental Analysis* or "SEA" means the Section that prepares the Board's environmental documents and analyses.

(j) *Third-Party Consultant* means an independent contractor, utilized by the applicant, who works with SEA's approval and under SEA's direction to prepare any necessary environmental documentation. The third party consultant must act on behalf of the Board. The railroad may participate in the selection process, as well as in the subsequent preparation of environmental documents. However, to avoid any impermissible conflict of interest (*i.e.*, essentially any financial or other interest in the outcome of the railroad-sponsored project), the railroad may not be responsible for the selection or control of independent contractors.

[56 FR 36105, July 31, 1991, as amended at 64 FR 53268, Oct. 1, 1999]

§1105.5 Determinative criteria.

(a) In determining whether a "major Federal action" (as that term is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality in 40 CFR 1508.18) has the potential to affect significantly the quality of the human environment, the Board is guided by the definition of "significantly" at 40 CFR 1508.27.

(b) A finding that a service or transaction is not within the STB's jurisdiction does not require an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act or historic review

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under the National Historic Preservation Act.

(c) The environmental laws are not triggered where the STB's action is nothing more than a ministerial act, as in:

(1) The processing of abandonments proposed under the Northeast Rail Services Act (45 U.S.C. 744(b)(3));

(2) Statutorily-authorized interim trail use arrangements under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) [see, 49 CFR 1152.29]; or

(3) Financial assistance arrangements under 49 U.S.C. 10905 (see 49 CFR 1152.27).

Finally, no environmental analysis is necessary for abandonments that are authorized by a bankruptcy court, or transfers of rail lines under plans of reorganization, where our function is merely advisory under 11 U.S.C. 1166, 1170, and 1172.

[56 FR 36105, July 31, 1991; 56 FR 49821, Oct. 1, 1991]

§1105.6 Classification of actions.

(a) Environmental Impact Statements will normally be prepared for rail construction proposals other than those described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(b) Environmental Assessments will normally be prepared for the following proposed actions:

(1) Construction of connecting track within existing rail rights-of-way, or on land owned by the connecting railroads;

(2) Abandonment of a rail line (unless proposed under the Northeast Rail Services Act or the Bankruptcy Act);

(3) Discontinuance of passenger train service or freight service (except for discontinuances of freight service under modified certificates issued under 49 CFR 1150.21 and discontinuances of trackage rights where the affected line will continue to be operated);

(4) An acquisition, lease or operation under 49 U.S.C. 10901 or 10910, or consolidation, merger or acquisition of control under 49 U.S.C. 11343, if it will result in either

(i) Operational changes that would exceed any of the thresholds established in §1105.7(e) (4) or (5); or

(ii) An action that would normally require environmental documentation

(such as a construction or abandonment);

(5) A rulemaking, policy statement, or legislative proposal that has the potential for significant environmental impacts;

(6) Water carrier licensing under 49 U.S.C. 10922 that:

(i) Involves a new operation (*i.e.*, one that adds a significant number of barges to the inland waterway system requiring the addition of towing capacity, or otherwise significantly alters an existing operation, or introduces service to a new waterway that has had no previous traffic, or involves the commencement of a new service that is not statutorily exempt); or

(ii) Involves the transportation of hazardous materials; and

(7) Any other proceeding not listed in paragraphs (a) or (c) of this section.

(c) No environmental documentation will normally be prepared (although a Historic Report may be required under section 1105.8) for the following actions:

(1) Motor carrier, broker, or freight forwarder licensing and water carrier licensing not included in section 1105.6(b)(6);

(2) Any action that does not result in significant changes in carrier operations (*i.e.*, changes that do not exceed the thresholds established in section 1105.7(e) (4) or (5)), including (but not limited to) all of the following actions that meet this criterion:

(i) An acquisition, lease, or operation under 49 U.S.C. 10901 or 10910, or consolidation, merger, or acquisition of control under 49 U.S.C. 11343 that does not come within subsection (b)(4) of this section.

(ii) Transactions involving corporate changes (such as a change in the ownership or the operator, or the issuance of securities or reorganization) including grants of authority to hold position as an officer or director;

(iii) Declaratory orders, interpretation or clarification of operating authority, substitution of an applicant, name changes, and waiver of lease and interchange regulations;

(iv) Pooling authorizations, approval of bureau agreements, and approval of shipper antitrust immunity;