

each of these carriers is currently held in independent voting trusts to avoid any unlawful control pending disposition of this proceeding.

Applicant submits that there will be no transfer of any federal or state operating authorities held by the acquired carriers. Following the consummation of the control transaction, each of the acquired carriers will continue operating in the same manner as before and, according to applicant, granting the application will not reduce competitive options available to the traveling public. Applicant asserts that the acquired carriers do not compete with one another or, to any meaningful degree, with any other Coach-controlled company. Applicant submits that each of the acquired carriers is relatively small and each faces substantial competition from other bus companies and other transportation modes.

Applicant also submits that granting the application will produce substantial benefits, including interest cost savings from the restructuring of debt and reduced operating costs from Coach's enhanced volume purchasing power. Specifically, applicant claims that the carriers to be acquired will benefit from lower insurance premiums negotiated by Coach and from volume discounts for equipment and fuel. Applicant indicates that Coach will provide each of the carriers to be acquired with centralized legal and accounting functions and coordinated purchasing services. In addition, applicant states that vehicle sharing arrangements will be facilitated through Coach to ensure maximum use and efficient operation of equipment and that coordinated driver training services will be provided. Applicant also states that the proposed transaction will benefit the employees of the acquired carriers and that all collective bargaining agreements will be honored by Coach.

Coach plans to acquire control of additional motor passenger carriers in the coming months. It asserts that the financial benefits and operating efficiencies will be enhanced further by these subsequent transactions. Over the long term, Coach states that it will provide centralized marketing and reservation services for the bus firms that it controls, thereby enhancing the benefits resulting from these control transactions.

Applicant certifies that: (1) Blue Bird, Butler, Gad-About, and P&S hold satisfactory safety ratings from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and that PTCS, S&O, Tippett, Tucker,

and Utica-Rome have not been rated by DOT; (2) each of the acquired carriers has sufficient liability insurance; (3) none of the acquired carriers is either domiciled in Mexico or owned or controlled by persons of that country; and (4) approval of the transaction will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources. Additional information may be obtained from applicant's representatives.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), we must approve and authorize a transaction we find consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least: (1) The effect of the transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public; (2) the total fixed charges that result; and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees.

On the basis of the application, we find that the proposed acquisition of control is consistent with the public interest and should be authorized. If any opposing comments are timely filed, this finding will be deemed vacated and a procedural schedule will be adopted to reconsider the application. If no opposing comments are filed by the expiration of the comment period, this decision will take effect automatically and will be the final Board action.

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This decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. The proposed acquisition of control is approved and authorized, subject to the filing of opposing comments.

2. If timely opposing comments are filed, the findings made in this decision will be deemed vacated.

3. This decision will be effective on August 3, 1998, unless timely opposing comments are filed.

4. A copy of this notice will be served on the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530.

Decided: June 10, 1998.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-16392 Filed 6-18-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33606]

Minnesota Commercial Railway Company—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Certain Lines of The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

Minnesota Commercial Railway Company (MC), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire and operate approximately 5 miles of rail line owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), plus incidental trackage rights to reach certain industries and MC's own trackage.¹ The line is located in Minneapolis, MN, known as the Southeast Minneapolis Switching District (SEMSD).²

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after May 28, 1998.

If this notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke does not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33606, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Eugenia Langan, Esq., Shea & Gardner, 1800 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: June 11, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-16317 Filed 6-18-98; 8:45 am]

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¹ MC certifies that its projected revenues will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier.

² BNSF classified the SEMSD as industrial trackage, and, consequently, there are no mileposts on the subject trackage.