

216-0874, E-mail:
SKIP.HORVATH@INGAA.ORG
Gas Industry Standards Board, Rae
McQuade, Phone: (713) 757-4175,
Fax: (713) 757-2491, E-mail:
GISB@AOL.COM.

Industry Trade Associations

Interstate Natural Gas Association of
America, Terry Boss, (202) 216-5930
American Gas Association, Gary
Gardner, (703) 841-8515
American Public Gas Association, Bob
Cave, (703) 352-3890
Gas Processors Association, Johnny
Dreyer, 918-493-7047
Association of Oil Pipe Lines, Michele
Joy, Phone: (202) 408-7970
American Petroleum Institute, Kendra
Martin, Phone: (202) 682-8517

State Pipeline Safety Organizations

National Association of Pipeline Safety
Representatives (Call Roger Little at
(202) 366-4569 if you need the
number of your state pipeline safety
representative)
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners (NARUC),
Sally Allbright, (202) 898-2200

Issued in Washington, D.C., on August 3,
1998.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.
[FR Doc. 98-21178 Filed 8-6-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. MC-F-20929]

**Laidlaw, Inc., et al.—Control—Dave
Transportation Services, et al.;**
**Merger—Allegheny Valley Transit Inc.
et al.**

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice tentatively approving
finance application.

SUMMARY: Laidlaw, Inc. (Laidlaw or
applicant), has filed an application
under 49 U.S.C. 14303 to control 10
motor passenger carriers through direct
or indirect stock ownership and to
merge 21 motor passenger carriers into
Laidlaw Transit, Inc. (Transit), a
subsidiary of Laidlaw. Persons wishing
to oppose the application must follow
the rules at 49 CFR part 1182, subpart
B. The Board has tentatively approved
the transaction and, if no opposing
comments are timely filed, this notice
will be the final Board action.

DATES: Comments are due by September
21, 1998. Applicants may reply by
October 6, 1998. If no comments are

received by September 21, 1998, this
notice will become effective on that
date.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10
copies of any comments referring to STB
Docket No. MC-F-20929 to: Surface
Transportation Board, Office of the
Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K
Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-
0001. In addition, send one copy of any
comments to applicant's representative:
Mark J. Andrews, Barnes & Thornburg,
Franklin Tower, Suite 500, 1401 Eye
Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 565-1600 [TDD
for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-
1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Laidlaw, a
publicly-held Canadian noncarrier,
seeks authority to control 10 motor
carrier subsidiaries through direct or
indirect stock ownership and to merge
21 motor carriers into Transit.
Apparently, the transactions have
previously occurred, but the required
authority had not been obtained from
the Board or its predecessor, the
Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC).
Laidlaw indicates that it is coming
forward voluntarily to seek nunc pro
tunc authorization for these
transactions.

Laidlaw initially contends that the
transactions may not be subject to Board
jurisdiction, claiming that the
transactions will affect regulated
passenger service only in form rather
than substance. *See Stone Container
Corporation—Control Exemption—
Southwest Forest Industries Inc.,*
Finance Docket No. 30998 (ICC served
Apr. 1, 1987). We disagree. Laidlaw's
principal business is motor carrier
transit, and its acquisition of control
and merger of motor carriers is precisely
the sort of authority Congress desired to
regulate by enacting 49 U.S.C. 14303.

Eight of the motor carriers
subsidiaries Laidlaw seeks authority to
control are: (1) Dave Transportation
Services, Inc. (Dave Transportation)
(MC-144040), which is authorized to
provide charter and special operations
nationwide except in Hawaii; (2)
Greyhound Canada Transportation
Corp. (Greyhound Canada) (MC-
304126), which is authorized to provide
nationwide charter and special
operations as well as limited regular-
route service in Michigan, New York
and Washington near U.S.-Canada
border crossings;¹ (3) Laidlaw Transit
Ltd. (Limited) (MC-102189), which is
authorized to provide nationwide

¹ Apparently, Greyhound Canada is not affiliated
with Greyhound Lines, Inc. of Dallas, TX.

charter and special operations as well as
limited regular-route service in
Michigan near a U.S.-Canada border
crossing; (4) Roesch Lines, Inc. (Roesch)
(MC-119843), which is authorized to
provide nationwide charter and special
operations and intrastate operations in
California; (5) Safe Ride Services, Inc.
(Safe Ride) (MC-246193), which is
authorized to provide charter and
special operations nationwide except in
Alaska and Hawaii; (6) The DAVE
Companies Inc. (DAVE) (no federal
authority but holds intrastate authority
in California and Minnesota);²
(7) Vancom Transportation—Illinois L.P.
(Vancom) (MC-167816), which is
authorized to provide charter and
special operations nationwide except in
Alaska and Hawaii; and (8) Willett
Motor Coach Co. (Willett) (MC-16073),
which is authorized to provide charter
and special operations between the
Chicago, IL area and 14 States and the
District of Columbia.

Transit, the ninth carrier subsidiary
(MC-161299), holds nationwide charter
and special operations authority as a
result of a transaction authorized in
*Laidlaw Transit, Inc. et al.—Control and
Merger Exemption—National School
Bus Service, Inc., Charterways
Transportation Limited, Enterprise
Transit Corp., and MCS Interstate, Inc.,*
STB Finance Docket No. 33007 (STB
served Oct. 25, 1996).

The tenth carrier subsidiary, Gray
Line of Vancouver Holdings Limited
(Gray Line), proposes to acquire
operating authority in MC-94107 held
by Pacific Northwest Bus Company,
Ltd., authorizing nationwide charter and
special operations and regular route
service between Seattle-Tacoma
International Airport and nearby U.S.-
Canada border crossings.

Applicant further seeks approval for
the merger into Transit of the following
motor carriers: (1) Allegheny Valley
Transit, Inc. (MC-172080); (2)
Blanchard Charter Service, Inc. (MC-
177427); (3) Cheshire Transportation Co.
(MC-27518); (4) Hunt's Bus Co., Inc.
(MC-212740); (5) Jelco LaCrosse, Inc.
(MC-165562); (6) Johnson's Bus, Inc.
(MC-153441); (7) Mark IV Charter Lines,
Inc. (MC-141743); (8) Mobility, Inc.
(MC-182217); (9) Palmer Motor Coach
Service, Inc. (MC-106642); (10) Peaslee
Transportation, Inc. (MC-167553); (11)
Raleigh Transportation Services, Inc.
(MC-165041) (Raleigh); (12) Strain's Bus
Co., Inc. (MC-148366); (13) Timberlane

² Laidlaw maintains that, even though this carrier
holds only intrastate authority, control of this entity
falls within the preemptive provisions of 49 U.S.C.
14303(f). The provisions of section 14303(f) apply
to the extent Laidlaw's control of DAVE is subject
to our jurisdiction.

Transportation, Inc. (MC-139100); (14) Town & Country Transportation & Leasing Corp. (MC-167514); (15) Travel Time Bus Lines, Inc. (MC-147777); (16) Tri-State Transit Corp. (MC-134039); (17) United Transportation, Inc. d/b/a Mark IV Coaches (MC-167307); (18) Vancom, Inc. (MC-163845); (19) Vancom-Indiana, Inc. (MC-141600); (20) Vancom Transportation, Inc. (MC-256505); and (21) Van Trans, Inc. (MC-167403).

Laidlaw states that all of the merged carriers primarily provided school transportation services within the United States, except for Raleigh, which primarily provided transit services in the U.S.

Applicant asserts that the combined aggregate gross revenues of its affiliates exceed the \$2 million jurisdictional threshold of section 14303(g). Applicant states further that most of its operations are either unregulated, or take place outside the U.S. Allegedly, the regulated U.S. transportation service faces substantial competition from other bus companies and transportation modes.

Laidlaw further indicates that the transactions have produced and will produce substantial benefits, including interest cost savings from restructuring of debt and reduced operating costs from its enhanced volume purchasing power. Applicant claims that the carriers it controls benefit from the lower insurance premiums it has negotiated and from volume discounts for equipment and fuel. Applicant also avers that it improves the efficiency of all acquired carriers, while maintaining responsiveness to local conditions, by providing centralized supporting services, including legal affairs, accounting, purchasing, safety management, equipment maintenance, driver training, human resources and environmental compliance. In addition, applicant states that it facilitates vehicle sharing arrangements between acquired entities, so as to ensure maximum utilization and efficient operation of equipment. According to applicant, employees will benefit from efficient operations and from applicant's policy to honor all collective bargaining agreements of acquired carriers.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), the Board must approve and authorize transactions it finds consistent with the public interest, taking into account at least: (1) The effect of the transactions 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 and merger transactions are

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 timely comments are filed by the expiration of the comment period, this decision will take effect automatically and will be the final Board action.³

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

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

It is ordered:

1. The acquisitions of control and mergers are approved and authorized, subject to the timely 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 September 21, 1998, unless timely opposing comments are filed.

4. A copy of this notice will be served on (1) the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Carriers-HIA 30, 400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20024; and (2) the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530.

Decided: July 30, 1998.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-21295 Filed 8-6-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

³ Laidlaw seeks *nunc pro tunc* approval of these transactions. While we are granting our tentative approval, the need for retroactive effect has not been demonstrated. Laidlaw evidently recognizes that it should have sought our approval sooner but, under the circumstances, the Board does not intend to pursue enforcement actions against Laidlaw for the previously unauthorized common control.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33407]

Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation—Construction and Operation of New Rail Facilities in Campbell, Converse, Niobrara, and Weston Counties, Wyoming; Custer, Fall River, Jackson, and Pennington Counties, South Dakota; and Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Steele Counties, Minnesota

AGENCIES: Surface Transportation Board; U.S.D.A. Forest Service; U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (collectively, the "Agencies").

ACTION: Amended Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); Extension of Request for Comments on the Draft EIS Scope.

SUMMARY: On February 20, 1998, the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. On April 28, 1998, DM&E submitted a Special Use Application to the U.S.D.A. Forest Service (USFS) for an easement under the Federal Land Management Policy Act to build new rail lines across portions of the Thunder Basin National Grassland in Wyoming, administered by the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, and across portions of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland, administered by the Nebraska National Forest. Because portions of RARE II roadless areas on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland could be affected, there is a possibility that the Nebraska National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan could be amended in the Forest Service Record of Decision. The Northern Great Plains (NGP) Management Plan Revision Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared at this time, which could affect the proposed action. Conversely, the proposed action, if approved, could affect the NGP Management Plan and a plan amendment may also be necessary. In April, 1998, DM&E also submitted its application to the U.S.D.I. Bureau of