Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 160, Sikeston, MO 63801, Telephone: (573) 472–5333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), will prepare an EIS for a proposed project to improve Missouri Route 8, located at the cities of Desloge and Park Hills in St. Francois County, Missouri.

The proposed action is considered necessary to improve the safety and efficiency of Missouri Route 8. Alternatives under consideration include (1) taking no action, (2) implementing Transportation System Management (TSM) options, (3) upgrading and improving the existing roadways, and (4) constructing a new four-lane roadway from a point west of the Route P (west) intersection to U.S. Route 67 to the east, or Route 32 to the south, on a full or partial relocation. The location study conducted during preparation of the EIS will provide definitive alternatives for evaluation by the EIS. The proposed action will likely include transportation improvements in St. Francois County from west of Route P to U.S. Route 67 or Route 32.

The scoping process will involve all appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. Preliminary comments and information are currently being solicited from agencies. Prelocation meetings were held in November 1996. Preliminary improvement and relocation concepts were presented at public information meetings held in May 1998. Additional public meetings will be held to engage the regional community in the decision making process and to obtain public comment. Late in the study, a public hearing will be held to present the findings of the draft EIS (DEIS). The DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or to the MoDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12373 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued: October 16, 1998.

Donald L. Neumann,

Programs Engineer, Jefferson City.

[FR Doc. 98–29023 Filed 10–28–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance from certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

Florida East Coast Railway Company (Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA–1998–4648)

The Florida East Coast Railway Company (FEC) seeks a waiver of compliance from certain provisions of the Railroad Power Brake and Drawbars regulations, 49 CFR Section 232, in order to administer a test program involving a test train equipped with an Electronically Controlled Pneumatic Brake (ECPB) system, manufactured by GE Harris Railway Electronics, L.L.C. (GE Harris), that operates from a radio signal. FEC has the support of GE Harris in this pilot test program that is tentatively scheduled to run from November 1998 through July 1999. This test program would need relief from 49 CFR 232, Appendix B, Specifications and Requirements for Power Brakes and Appliances For Operating Power-Brake Systems For Freight Service, as well as, other areas of Part 232 that reference the control of train brakes by increasing or reducing brake pipe pressure.

An FEC aggregate unit train will be used for this test program. Approximately 100 aggregate cars (plus 10 spare rail cars) and a group of four FEC GP–40–3, 3000 hp locomotives, will be equipped with the GE Harris EP_x Direct Braking system. This train will operate as a unit train that makes a daily round trip from Miami to Cocoa (City Point), Florida, and return. In conjunction with FEC crew training, it is GE Harris' intention to provide field support prior to and during the test program. This field support will consist of manning the test rain with capable and knowledgeable personnel.

FEC and GE Harris offers the following information about the GE Harris EP_x Direct Braking system. The system uses electronically controlled brake valves to operate freight car brakes as opposed to solely pneumatically controlled brakes. The EP_x Direct Braking system on this test rain will perform identically to current ECPB trains in operation today. With the EP_x Direct Braking system there is a pneumatically controlled valve which monitors train brake pipe pressure. Should the brake pipe pressure fall at a rate of 16 psi per second (or greater), or if brake pipe pressure falls below 50 psi, the train is automatically placed into an emergency brake application condition. This valve provides a method to apply emergency brakes independent of the electronically controlled brake value mode of operation, thereby incorporating a redundant level of safety on the train analogous to the current emergency brake systems. Another capability of the EP_x Direct Braking system is a full emulation of the current ABDX style valve. This means the entire train can be run using brake pipe pressure to control the train's brakes (traditional pneumatic control mode), as an alternative to the electric mode should the need arise. The EP_x Direct Braking system consists of a Car Control Device, On-Car power source (Power Generator, Voltage Regulator, and Battery), and two antennae mounted to each rail car. Locomotive equipment consists of a Head End Unit (Operator's Interface), Communications Module (Radio and two antennae.

Prior to the actual test program train, GE Harris will functionally verify each pneumatic emulating electronic brake value against required performance parameters at their lab in Melbourne, Florida. A static rail car test will be performed in two separate phases. Phase 1 will validate the ABDX emulating mode of brake value operation. The second phase will validate the communication channel and network integrity. Upon completion of all static and brake rack tests, actual ECPB control will be tested in detail using the communications channel on the Florida East Coast Railroad. These tests will be conducted on sidings and/or controlled (closed to other traffic) track. A Test Readiness Review of all complied data will be conducted, whereby all parties will be provided with the actual test results of each previous test phase and how the results meet the performance requirements necessary to operate a test train safely and confidently. The test train will be assembled and after a week of successful static testing, a moving test

will take place, ultimately leading to the operation of a 100 car test train use in revenue service.

FEC believes the GE Harris EP_x Direct Braking system fully complies with the intent of the Railroad Power Brake and Drawbars regulations, 49 CFR Part 232, and that safety will not be compromised. In all phases of the test program, a fully functional emergency portion of the valve is in place and will react if activated.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number H–98–1) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Mail Stop 10, Washington, DC 20590. Communications received within 30 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.) at FRA's temporary docket room located at 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Room 7051, Washington, DC 20005.

Issued in Washington, DC on October 23, 1998.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 98–29005 Filed 10–28–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA–98–4578]

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 Passenger Cars

Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This notice announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 passenger cars that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is November 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL–401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. (Docket hours are from 9 am to 5 pm).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202–366–536).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

J.K. Motors of Kingsville, Maryland (''J.K.'') (Registered Importer 90–006) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which J.K. believes are substantially similar are 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 passenger cars that were manufactured for importation into, and sale in, the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared the non-U.S. certified 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 to its U.S. certified counterpart, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

J.K. submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that the non-U.S. certified 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7, as originally manufactured, conforms to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as its U.S. certified counterpart, or is capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that the 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 is identical to its U.S. certified counterpart with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence . . . .,* 103 *Defrosting and Defogging Systems,* 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems,* 105 *Hydraulic Brake Systems,* 106 *Brake Hoses,* 109 *New Pneumatic Tires,* 113 *Hood Latch Systems,* 116 *Brake Fluid,* 124 *Accelerator Control Systems,* 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact,* 202 *Head Restraints,* 203 I*mpact Protection for the Driver from the Steering Control System* (with respect to 1989 through 1991 hard top models alone, all others being exempt), 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement,* 205 *Glazing Materials,* 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components,* 207 *Seating Systems,* 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies,* 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages,* 212 *Windshield Retention,* 216 *Roof Crush Resistance,* 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion,* 301 *Fuel System Integrity, and* 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials.*

Additionally, the petitioner states that the 1987–1995 Mazda RX–7 complies with the Bumper Standard found in 49 CFR part 581.

Petitioner also contends that the vehicle is capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 101 *Controls and Displays:* (a) Substitution of a lens marked ''Brake'' for a lens with an ECE