

Surface Transportation Board (STB), Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Considerations

According to NEPA, the STB must examine the environmental impacts of any action subject to their jurisdiction. 49 CFR 1105.7 *Environmental Reports* requires that an applicant to the STB for an action must submit an Environmental Report on the proposed action prior to or concurrent with their application. The Environmental Report must contain the following:

- (1) **Proposed action and alternatives.** Describe the proposed action and any reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Include a readable detailed map and drawings clearly delineating the project.
- (2) **Transportation system.** Describe the effects of the proposed action on regional or local transportation systems and patterns. Estimate the amount of traffic that will be diverted.
- (3) **Land use.** Describe the proposed action's consistency or inconsistency with local and regional plans including agricultural land and coastal zones.
- (4) **Energy.** Describe the effect of the proposed action on energy resources. Consider recyclable commodities, overall energy efficiencies, and change in energy consumption.
- (5) **Air.** Determine if the proposed action will result in an increase in rail traffic, rail yard activity, or truck traffic, and quantify the anticipated effect on air emissions, and whether these increases are within the parameters of the State Implementation Plan. Describe any ozone depleting materials that may be transported, safety practices, the applicant's safety record, and contingency plans.
- (6) **Noise.** If any thresholds for air quality are surpassed, state whether the proposed action will cause an increase in noise levels. If the increase is beyond noise thresholds, identify noise receptors in the project area and quantify their noise increases.
- (7) **Safety.** Describe effects on public health and safety. If hazardous material may be transported, identify them, safety practices, the applicant's safety record, and contingency plans. Identify the location of any known hazardous waste sites or spill sites and their contents.
- (8) **Biological Resources.** State effects of the proposed action on endangered and threatened species or critical habitat. List any effects on wildlife sanctuaries and refuges, National or State parks and forests.
- (9) **Water.** Determine whether action is consistent with Federal, State, and local water quality standards, whether section 402 or 404 Clean Water Act permits are required, and whether action will affect any designated wetlands or 100-year flood plains.

- (10) **Proposed Mitigation:** Describe actions that are proposed to mitigate adverse environmental impacts.
- (11) **Additional required information specific to rail constructions includes:**
 - a. Describe proposed routes in plan view by State, country, and subdivision, showing relationship to existing transportation network.
 - b. Describe alternative routes considered and why they were not selected.
 - c. Describe construction plans and their effect on the human environment, labor force requirements, location of borrow pits, and earthwork estimates.
 - d. Describe the rail operations to be conducted on the line including freight estimates, daily number of train movements, number of cars per train, types of cars, motive power requirements, proposed speeds, labor force, and proposed maintenance-of-way.
 - e. If energy, noise, or air impact thresholds are met, describe the effects of new and diverted traffic.
 - f. Describe effects of essential public services, public roads, and adjoining properties. Discuss societal impacts including employment changes during and after construction.
 - g. Additional information specifically requested by the STB.