

Rotunda—Suite 220, 711 West 40th Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21211. Telephone (410) 962-4440.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FHWA in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of Transportation, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to provide multi-modal transportation measures within the I-270/U.S. 15 corridor in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, Maryland for a distance of approximately 35 miles.

The proposed strategies consist of a combination of improvements to the existing corridor such as highway widening, and transportation management strategies, as well as additional multi-modal facilities including a busway, or light rail transit. The purpose of the proposed transportation improvements is to address the effect of regional growth and traffic congestion on transportation trends and safety operations.

The I-270/U.S. 15 Corridor provides a connection between the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and central and western Maryland, as well as to the midwest via I-70 and I-68. Current operating conditions within the I-270/U.S. 15 Corridor reflect severe traffic congestion at many locations within the project area. Congestion is expected to increase as continued growth in both population and employment occur over the next quarter century.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and Local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in this proposal. A public hearing is anticipated in the fall of 1998. Public notice will be given of the time and place of this hearing.

The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing. Scoping meetings for the public, agencies, and for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments have been conducted throughout the course of the project. No formal scoping meeting for this project is planned at this time.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are 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 at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning And Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation of Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued On: December 3, 1997.

**Renee Sigel,**

*Planning, Research and Environment Team Leader, Baltimore.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

#### Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of 49 CFR Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

#### Rules Standards & Instructions Application (RS&I-AP)-No. 1102

##### Applicants

New Jersey Transit Rail Operations, Incorporated, Mr. Robert A. Randall, Vice President and General Manager—Rail, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, New Jersey 07105-2246.

Morristown and Erie Railway, Incorporated, Mr. Benjamin Friedland, President and General Manager, P. O. Box 2206, Morristown, New Jersey 07962-2206.

New Jersey Transit Rail Operations, Incorporated (NJTR) and the Morristown and Erie Railway, Incorporated (ME), jointly seek temporary relief from Section 236.566 of the Rules, Standards, and Instructions (49 CFR 236.566), to the extent that NJTR be permitted to operate two non-equipped ME locomotives in automatic cab signal territory, on the Morristown Line between Lower Hack, milepost 2.7 and Netcong, milepost 48.0; the Bergen County Line between Bergen Junction, milepost 3.1 and "BT," milepost 14.2; and the Boonton Line between Mountain View, milepost 21.3 and Denville, milepost 34.4, until such time as the locomotives can be equipped with automatic cab signal and automatic train control equipment, on or before June 30, 1998.

*Applicant's justification for relief:* NJTR is currently installing an automatic cab system on the associated trackage, and temporary relief is requested so that the other freight and passenger service can benefit at the earliest time, from the additional safety afforded by the cab signal and automatic train control systems.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the protestant in the proceeding. The original and two copies of the protest shall be filed with the Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 within 45 calendar days of the date of issuance of this notice. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on December 1, 1997.

**Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,**

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-97-3190]

#### Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1994-1997 Mercedes-Benz S500 Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1994-1997 Mercedes-Benz S500 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 1994-1997 Mercedes-Benz S500 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