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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 927-5660. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., Room 2229, 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20423. Telephone: (202) 289-4357/4359. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 927-5721.]

Decided: March 14, 1996.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Simmons, and Commissioner Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,  
*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 96-7420 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-00-P**

[Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 36X)]<sup>1</sup>

**Soo Line Railroad Company—  
Abandonment Exemption—in Stearns  
and Morrison Counties, MN**

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Notice of exemption.

**SUMMARY:** The Board, under 49 U.S.C. 10505, exempts from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903-04 the abandonment by Soo Line Railroad Company (Soo) of the remaining 60.22 miles of its Brooten Line between milepost 104.00 near Brooten and milepost 164.22 near Genola (end of line), in Stearns and Morrison Counties, MN, subject to standard labor protective conditions, environmental conditions, and a public use condition.

**DATES:** Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance has been received, this exemption will be effective on April 26, 1996. Formal expressions of intent to file an offer<sup>2</sup> of financial assistance under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2) must be filed by April 8, 1996; petitions to stay must be filed by April 11, 1996; requests for a public use condition must be filed

by April 16, 1996; and petitions to reopen must be filed by April 22, 1996. **ADDRESSES:** Send pleadings referring to Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 36X) to: (1) Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423, and (2) Larry D. Starns, 1000 Soo Line Building, 105 South 5th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 927-5660. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., Room 2229, 1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20423. Telephone: (202) 289-4357/4359. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 927-5721.]

Decided: March 13, 1996.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Simmons, and Commissioner Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,  
*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 96-7419 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**

**Agency Information Collection  
Activities; Proposed Collection;  
Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this information collection. This request for comment is being made pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Comments should address the accuracy of the burden estimates and ways to minimize the burden including the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other

forms of information technology, as well as other relevant aspects of the information collection.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposal for the collection of information should be received on or before May 28, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Gladys Lane, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (00SB), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. All comments will become a matter of public record and will be summarized in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. This document solicits comments concerning the following information collection:

*OMB Control Number:* 2900-0444.

*Title and Form Number:* VAAR Subpart 819.70, Veteran-Owned and Operated Small Business, (Exceptions to SF 18 and SF 129).

*Type of Review:* Reinstatement without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

*Need and Uses:* The information will be used by VA to identify veteran-owned business to ensure eligible veteran-owned firms are given an opportunity to participate in VA solicitations for goods and services. Without this information there would be no way to properly monitor this program.

*Current Actions:* Public Law 93-237, amended the Small Business Act by directing the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to give "special consideration" to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in all SBA programs. In September 1983, VA adopted the "special consideration" philosophy and directed all VA contracting activities to take affirmative action to solicit and assist Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned small businesses to participate in VA acquisition process. This established VA Vietnam Era and Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Outreach Program. In October 1983, VA received OMB approval to modify SF 18, Request for Quotations, and SF 129, Solicitation Mailing List Application, to include Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned information. On April 5, 1990, the Secretary approved an initiative to expand the Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned small business program to include all veteran-owned small

<sup>2</sup> See *Exempt. of Rail Abandonment—Offers of Finan. Assist.*, 4 I.C.C.2d 164 (1987).

businesses. Title 38 U.S.C. vests the Secretary with broad authority and responsibility to assist veterans. Therefore, we requested that approval be granted to include veteran-owned business in addition to Vietnam Era and disabled veteran-owned businesses information on SF 18 and SF 129. The information requested will be a self certification that a firm is veteran-owned. It allows VA to ensure that eligible veteran-owned firms are given an opportunity to participate in VA acquisitions and to monitor our success in implementing these regulatory provisions. The information requested on the SF 18 and SF 129 will be solicited from the respondents on a voluntary basis.

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit.

*Estimated Annual Burden:* 14,181 hours.

*Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:* Additional burden imposed on SF 18 and SF 129 is 15 seconds.

*Frequency of Response:* On occasion.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 3,403,500.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or copies of the reports should be directed to Department of Veterans Affairs, Attn: Ron Taylor, VA Clearance Officer (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, Telephone (202) 565-4412 or FAX (202) 565-8267.

Dated: March 14, 1996.

By direction of the Secretary.

William T. Morgan,  
Management Analyst.

[FR Doc. 96-7324 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

**Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Collection; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Affairs.  
**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this information collection. This request for comment is being made pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Comments should address the accuracy of the burden estimates and ways to minimize the

burden including the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology, as well as other relevant aspects of the information collection.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposal for the collection of information should be received on or before May 28, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20M30), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. All comments will become a matter of public record and will be summarized in the VBA request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. In this document VBA is soliciting comments concerning the following information collection:

*OMB Control Number:* 2900-0101.

*Title and Form Number:* Eligibility Verification Reports.

a. Old Law Eligibility Verification Report (Surviving Spouse), VA Form 21-0511S.

b. Old Law Eligibility Verification Report (Veteran), VA Form 21-0511V.

c. Section 306 Eligibility Verification Report (Surviving Spouse), VA Form 21-0512S.

d. Section 306 Eligibility Verification Report (Veteran), VA Form 21-0512V.

e. Old Law and Section 306 Eligibility Verification Report (Children Only), VA Form 21-0513.

f. DIC Parent's Eligibility Verification Report, VA Form 21-0514.

g. Improved Pension Eligibility Verification Report (Veteran With No Children), VA Form 21-0516.

h. Improved Pension Eligibility Verification Report (Veteran With Children), VA Form 21-0517.

i. Improved Pension Eligibility Verification Report (Surviving Spouse With No Children), VA Form 21-0518.

j. Improved Pension Eligibility Verification Report (Child or Children), VA Form 21-0519C.

k. Improved Pension Eligibility Verification Report (Surviving Spouse With Children), VA Form 21-0519S.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Need and Uses:* These reports are used by VA regional offices to verify continued eligibility for pension and parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and to determine whether adjustments in the rate of payment are necessary. These reports are also used for developing supplemental income and estate information from claimants who have previously filed a formal application for pension or parents' DIC. It would be

impossible to administer the pension and parents' DIC programs without the collection of information.

*Current Actions:* Until recently, VA was required by 38 U.S.C. 1315(e) and 38 U.S.C. 1506(2) to secure a completed Eligibility Verification Report (EVR) at least once a year from every pension beneficiary and every parents' DIC beneficiary under the age of 72, showing the beneficiary's income and dependency status and verifying other entitlement factors. Public Law 103-271, the Board of Veterans' Appeals Administrative Procedures Improvement Act of 1994, amended 38 U.S.C. 1315 and 1506 to give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs discretionary authority to require submission of income and resource reports by recipients of income-based benefits. VA amended 38 CFR 3.256 and 38 CFR 3.277 to require submission of an EVR in three instances. First, VA will require submission of an EVR by any beneficiary whose Social Security number, or whose spouse's Social Security number, has not been verified by the Social Security Administration. VA will also require beneficiaries who receive income other than Social Security to submit an EVR. Further, VA will require completion of an EVR if it determines that submission of an EVR is necessary to preserve program integrity.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households.

*Estimated Annual Burden:* 406,250 hours.

*Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:* 30 minutes per report.

*Frequency of Response:* Semi-annually.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 325,000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or copies of the reports should be directed to Department of Veterans Affairs, Attn: Ron Taylor, VA Clearance Officer (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, Telephone (202) 565-4412 or FAX (202) 565-8267.

Dated: March 13, 1996.

By direction of the Secretary.

William T. Morgan,  
Management Analyst.

[FR Doc. 96-7328 Filed 3-26-96; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

**Agency Information Collection; Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Affairs.