

priority order, so that the presentations at the March 17 R&D meeting can be most useful to the audience. Specific R&D topics are listed below. Many of these topics have been discussed at previous meetings. Suggestions for agenda topics are not restricted to this listing, and interested parties are invited to suggest other R&D topics of specific interest to their organizations. Additionally, if any interested parties would like to make a presentation regarding technical issues concerning any of NHTSA's research programs, information concerning the proposed topic and speaker should be submitted in writing by close of business February 27, 1998.

Specific R&D topics are:

Fiscal Year 1998 R&D Research Efforts,
International Harmonized Research Activities (IHRA),
On-line tracking system for NHTSA's research projects, and
Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN).
Specific Crashworthiness R&D topics are:
Automatic lifesaving system—improved triage, transport, and treatment decisionmaking for automatic collision notification technologies,
Status of advanced air bag research, Demonstration of CD ROM for child restraint/vehicle compatibility,
Preparation of new dummies for assessment of advanced air bag technology,
Status of research on restraint systems for rollover protection,
Improved frontal crash protection (program status, problem identification, offset testing),
Advanced glazing research,
Vehicle aggressivity and fleet compatibility,
Upgrade side crash protection,
Upgrade seat and occupant restraint systems,
Child safety research (ISOFIX),
Child restraint/air bag interaction (CRABI) dummy testing,
Truck crashworthiness/occupant protection,
National Transportation Biomechanics Research Center (NTBRC),
Head and neck injury research,
Lower extremity injury research,
Thorax injury research,
Human injury simulation and analysis,
Refinements to the Hybrid III dummy, and
Advanced frontal test dummy.
Specific Crash Avoidance R&D topics are:

National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS),
Intelligent vehicle initiative,
Cellular phone use in vehicles,
Status and plans for anti-lock brake system (ABS) research and testing,
Human factors guidelines for crash avoidance warning devices,
Drowsy driver monitoring,
Driver workload assessment,
Rearend collision avoidance system guidelines,
Road departure collision avoidance system guidelines,
Intersection collision avoidance system guidelines,
Lane change/merge collision avoidance system guidelines.

National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) topic is:

Special crash investigation studies of air bag cases.

Separately, questions regarding research projects that have been submitted in writing not later than close of business on March 31, 1998, will be answered. A transcript of the meeting, copies of materials handed out at the meeting, and copies of the suggestions offered by commenters will be available for public inspection at NHTSA's Technical Information Services, Room 5108, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, DC 20590. Copies of the transcript will then be available at 10 cents a page, upon request to NHTSA's Technical Information Services. The Technical Information Services section is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The transcript will also be available on NHTSA's Web site under Announcements/Public Meetings at URL <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/>.

NHTSA will provide technical aids to participants as necessary, during the Research and Development Programs Meeting. Thus, any person desiring the assistance of "auxiliary aids" (e.g., sign-language interpreter, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TTDs), readers, taped texts, braille materials, or large print materials and/or a magnifying device), please contact Rita Gibbons on (202) 366-4862 or by telefax on (202) 366-5930 by close of business March 5, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rita Gibbons, Staff Assistant, Office of Research and Development, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-4862. Fax number: (202) 366-5930.

Issued: February 13, 1998.

Raymond P. Owings,

Associate Administrator for Research and Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-97-3194; Notice 1]

Cosco, Inc.; Receipt of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Cosco, Incorporated of Columbus, Indiana, has determined that several models of the Touriva convertible child restraint system fail to comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 213, "Child Restraint Systems," (49 CFR 571.213) and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, "Defects and Noncompliance Reports." Cosco has also petitioned to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301—"Motor Vehicle Safety" on the basis that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

This notice of receipt of a petition is published under 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 and does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgement concerning the merits of the petition.

FMVSS No. 213, Paragraph S5.7 requires that each material used in a child restraint system shall conform to the requirements of S4 of FMVSS No. 302, "Flammability of Interior Materials." This requires that any material that does not adhere to other material(s) at every point of contact shall meet the burn rate requirements of S4.3 when tested separately. Materials are to be tested as a composite only if the material adheres to other material(s) at every point of contact.

After testing by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and notification to Cosco, the company confirmed through its own investigation that it manufactured and distributed 148,098 Touriva convertible child restraint systems between April 1994 and June 1996, of which 82,176 have covers that incorporate an additional polyester fiberfill pillow which may not meet the flammability requirements of FMVSS Nos. 213 and 302. The Cosco child restraints affected and the dates of production are as follows: Touriva Overhead Shield Accu-Just (Model 02-025; 3/95 to 6/96); Touriva Luxury

Overhead Shield AccuJust (Model 02-045; 2/95 to 6/96); Touriva Overhead Shield (Model 02-034; 4/94 to 6/96); Touriva Overhead Shield Accu-Just (Model 02-054; 4/94 to 6/96); Touriva 5 point (Model 02-564; 3/95 to 6/96); Touriva Overhead Shield (Model 02-055; 1/95 to 6/96); Touriva Luxury Overhead Shield (Model 02-065; 3/95 to 6/96); Olympian Overhead Shield (Model 02-257; 6/96); Touriva 5 point (Model 02-597; 6/96); Touriva Safe T-Shield (Model 02-096; 4/96 to 6/96); and Touriva Overhead Shield Accu-Just (Model 02-064; 1/95 to 6/96). All of the models listed are convertible child restraints incorporating the same shell design and a pillow in the head contact area, but the different models are a combination of restraint types, cover designs, and options. In each of the affected models, a polyester fiberfill is utilized to form the pillow in the head area of the cover, and it is this polyester fiberfill material which exceeded the 4 inches per minute burn rate when tested in accordance with S5 of FMVSS No. 302. In its investigation, Cosco found burn rates ranging from 17.3 inches per minute to 39.5 inches per minute in six tests conducted on two different samples of the polyester fiberfill in question. In addition, Cosco determined that the noncompliant fiberfill material had been provided by one of the two vendors responsible for supplying the material to Cosco, but that not all fiberfill from this particular supplier was non-complying. However, as Cosco is unable to limit the extent to which the Touriva child restraints in question were manufactured with non-complying fiberfill with greater certainty, the 82,176 units referenced above represent all Touriva models manufactured using fiberfill from the supplier of the non-compliant material.

Cosco supports its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following:

The non-complying polyester fiberfill is incorporated into a pillow located in the child restraint near the top of the pad in a vertical orientation. Cosco contends that this configuration minimizes the likelihood of ignition from cigarettes, which are specifically listed in FMVSS Standard No. 302 as a primary ignition source of concern, or any other similar ignition source.

The amount of potentially non-complying polyester fiberfill incorporated in the pillow is 0.0951 pounds, or approximately one percent of the total weight of the child restraint. This relatively small amount of non-complying polyester fiberfill is fully encased by materials which comply with the FMVSS No. 302 flammability

requirements to include the fabric covering the surface of the pad, the polyurethane foam in the pad, the fabric backing of the pad, and the polypropylene shell itself. The only way the non-complying fiberfill would be exposed to a source of ignition that has not already consumed the child restraint is if the cover of the pillow is torn, exposing the fiberfill, and an ignition source then finds its way to this exposed fiberfill. Cosco contends that the probability of such a sequence of events occurring is virtually nonexistent, and that the corresponding potential of the non-complying polyester fiberfill in the pillow contributing to an injury or death even less likely.

Cosco has not received reports indicating the burning of a cover of one of the suspect models, or any other child restraint cover. All occupant protection studies reviewed by Cosco indicate an almost infinitesimal risk of injury or death by vehicle fires in collisions.

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments on the application of Cosco described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: U.S. Department of Transportation Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested, but not required, that two copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be considered. The application and supporting materials, and all comments received after the closing date, will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the application is granted or denied, the notice will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: March 23, 1998.

(49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

Issued on: February 13, 1998.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 98-4354 Filed 2-19-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 290 (Sub No. 4)]

Railroad Cost Recovery Procedures—Productivity Adjustment

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Proposed adoption of a Railroad Cost Recovery Procedures productivity adjustment.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board proposes to adopt 1.096 (9.6%) as the measure of average growth in railroad productivity for the 1992-1996 (5-year) period. The current value of 5.0% was developed for the 1991 to 1995 period.

DATES: Comments are due by March 9, 1998.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The proposed productivity adjustment is effective 30 days after the date of service.

ADDRESSES: Send comments (an original and 10 copies) referring to STB Ex Parte No. 290 (Sub-No. 4) to: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. Parties should submit all pleading and attachments on a 3.5-inch diskette in WordPerfect 6.0 or 6.1 compatible format.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: H. Jeff Warren, (202) 565-1549. TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.

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., Suite 210, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001, telephone (202) 289-4357. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 565-1695.]

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or energy conservation.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), we conclude that our action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Decided: February 9, 1998.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-4358 Filed 2-19-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33549]

Pioneer Industrial Railway Co.—Lease and Operation Exemption—Peoria, Peoria Heights & Western Railroad

Pioneer Industrial Railway Co. (PRY), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to