

the public hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

Appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal will be sent letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments.

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 Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding governmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

John R. Mack,
District Engineer.

[FR Doc. 03-19097 Filed 7-25-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Salt Lake County, Utah

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for proposed transportation improvements in Salt Lake County, Utah.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Morrow, Field Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 2520 West 4700 South Suite 9A, Salt Lake City, Utah 84118-1847, Telephone: (801) 963-0182.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Utah Department of Transportation will prepare an environmental impact statement on proposed transportation improvements in the 11400 South area. The proposed improvements will be developed after a study has been completed to determine the current and future transportation needs in the study area, which extends from 10400 south to 12600 south and from 700 East to Bangerter Highway. The FHWA will

evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives including such alternatives as increasing capacity by other methods like changing the facilities at 12300 and/or 10600 South, expanded public transportation system, intelligent transportation system and/or traffic demand management. FHWA will fully evaluate the indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed project as required by law. The proposed project study area lies within Salt Lake County and includes portions of Draper City, Riverton City, Sandy City, and South Jordan City, Utah.

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 series of public meetings, including scoping meetings, will be held in the project area. In addition, a public hearing will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure the full range of issues related to this proposed action and 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 Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: July 22, 2003.

Gregory S. Punske,
Environmental Project Manager, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[FR Doc. 03-19060 Filed 7-25-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement; Sherburne County, MN

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Tier I environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for proposed highway improvements to Trunk Highway (TH)

10 from 1.0 mile east of Big Lake to 0.75 mile west of Big Lake, in Sherburne County, Minnesota. The Tier I EIS will include the analysis needed for a location decision to facilitate preservation of right-of-way.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cheryl Martin, Federal Highway Administration, Galtier Plaza, 380 Jackson Street, Suite 500, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, Telephone (651) 291-6120; or Claudia Dumont, Project Manager, Minnesota Department of Transportation—District 3B, 3725 12th Street North, ST. Cloud, Minnesota 56303, Telephone (320) 654-5134.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, will prepare a Tier I EIS on a proposal to improve TH 10 from 1.0 mile east of Big Lake to 0.75 mile west of Big Lake, in Sherburne County, Minnesota. The proposed action is being considered to preserve right-of-way for the proposed highway improvement. The proposed action is being considered to address future transportation demand, safety problems, access management and interregional corridor status.

The Tier I EIS will evaluate the social, economic, transportation and environmental impacts of alternatives, including: (1) No-Build, (2) Improvements to the existing TH 10 corridor, and (3) One or more new alignments south of existing TH 10.

The Tier II EIS will be prepared in approximately ten to fifteen years. At that time, design alternatives for the preferred alignment will be considered and environmental impacts and mitigation will be studied in greater detail. The construction of the preferred alternative is planned for implementation in approximately fifteen years.

It is anticipated that the "TH 10 Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document" will be published in the Fall of 2003. A press release will be published to inform the public of the document's availability. Copies of the scoping document will be distributed to agencies, interested persons and libraries for review to aid in identifying issues and analyses to be contained in the Tier I EIS. A thirty-day comment period for review of the document will be provided to afford an opportunity for all interested persons, agencies and groups to comment on the proposed action. A public scoping meeting will also be held during the comment period. Public notice will be given for the time and place of the meeting. A Tier I Draft EIS will be prepared based on the

outcome of the scoping process. Coordination has been initiated and will continue with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in the proposed action. 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 Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: July 10, 2003.

Stanley M. Graczyk,

Project Development, Team Leader, Federal Highway Administration, St. Paul, Minnesota.
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2003-15642]

Safety Auditor Certification; Extension of Statutory Compliance Date

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of extension of statutory compliance date.

SUMMARY: The FMCSA is required by law to ensure that all safety audits or compliance reviews of motor carriers conducted after December 31, 2002 be conducted by duly certified personnel. The Secretary of Transportation is authorized to extend this deadline until December 31, 2003 by notifying Congress that implementation of this requirement cannot be achieved by the initial deadline, and stating the reasons. By this document the FMCSA is notifying the public that on July 17, 2003 the Secretary of Transportation gave notice to Congress that he is extending the deadline to December 31, 2003. The extension is necessary because of a recent Federal court decision that set aside the FMCSA rule establishing procedures for certifying personnel to conduct safety reviews.

DATES: The Secretary of Transportation has extended the statutory deadline for

49 U.S.C. 31148(b) until December 31, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert Schultz, Jr., Office of Bus & Truck Standards and Operations, (202) 366-4001, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 8301, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On December 9, 1999, the President signed the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 (MCSIA)(Pub. L. 106-159). Section 210 of MCSIA requires that all new entrant motor carriers, both foreign and domestic, receive safety audits within 18 months of commencing operations in interstate or foreign commerce. Section 211 of MCSIA requires the Secretary of Transportation to complete a rulemaking to improve training and provide for the certification of motor carrier safety auditors to conduct safety inspection audits and reviews. The legislation also gives the Secretary oversight responsibility for these motor carrier auditors and investigators, including the authority to decertify them.

As enacted by section 211(a), 49 U.S.C. 31148(b) and (c) read as follows:

(b) CERTIFIED INSPECTION AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one year after completion of the Rulemaking required by subsection (a), any safety inspection audit or review required by, or based on the authority of, this chapter or chapter 5, 313, or 315 of this title and performed after December 31, 2002, shall be conducted by—

(1) a motor carrier safety auditor certified under subsection (a); or

(2) a Federal or State employee who, on the date of the enactment of this section, was qualified to perform such an audit or review.

(c) EXTENSION.—If the Secretary determines that subsection (b) cannot be implemented within the 1-year period established by that subsection and notifies the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives of the determination and the reasons therefor, the Secretary may extend the deadline for compliance with subsection (b) by not more than 12 months.

On March 19, 2002, the FMCSA published an Interim Final Rule implementing section 211 (the auditor certification rule) by establishing three types of certification: (1) Certification to conduct safety audits, (2) certification to conduct compliance reviews, and (3) certification to conduct roadside inspections (67 FR 12776). This rule

was primarily designed to respond to the increase in audits necessitated by the new entrant requirements of Section 210 of MCSIA. However, publication of the rule was one of several conditions imposed in the 2002 DOT Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 107-87), which had to be met before FMCSA could begin processing applications to allow Mexico-domiciled motor carriers to operate in the United States beyond the commercial zones along the United States-Mexico border in accordance with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Another condition imposed by the Appropriations Act was FMCSA publication of a rule implementing section 210 of MCSIA. An Interim Final Rule establishing procedures for increasing FMCSA's safety scrutiny of new entrant motor carriers, including standards and procedures regarding the safety audits mandated by section 210, was published on May 13, 2002 (67 FR 31978) and became effective on January 1, 2003.

FMCSA hired and trained over 200 people to perform compliance reviews, safety audits, and vehicle inspections. However, most audits of new entrant motor carriers are to be undertaken by State employees under the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP).

On January 16, 2003, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit set aside the auditor certification rule and two other FMCSA rules which established application and safety monitoring procedures for Mexico-domiciled motor carriers seeking authority to operate in the United States. The Court's ruling was based on its conclusion that FMCSA failed to comply with statutory environmental impact analysis requirements in developing these regulations. *Public Citizen v. Dept. of Transportation*, 316 F.3d 1002. The Department of Transportation filed a petition for rehearing with the Ninth Circuit, but this petition was denied on April 10, 2003. Consequently, the Court's mandate setting aside the three rules took effect on April 18, 2003.

As noted above, section 210 of the MCSIA requires that all new entrant motor carriers, both foreign and domestic, receive safety audits within 18 months of commencing operations in interstate or foreign commerce. As a result of the Ninth Circuit decision in *Public Citizen*, FMCSA and its State partners will not be able to hire and train additional personnel to conduct motor carrier safety audits, reviews or inspections, thereby impairing their ability to comply with the statutory mandate regarding new entrant motor carriers. The consequent reduction of