

Order No. 104908 issued January 26, 1995.

A public scoping meeting will be held in the fall of 2003. The purpose of the public scoping meeting is to request comments and identify issues that will be considered during the evaluation of alignment alternatives and preparation of the EIS. All interested citizens are encouraged to attend these meetings. Large-scale maps of the project area will be displayed at the meeting. This will be the first in a series of meetings to solicit public comments on the proposed action. In addition, a public hearing will be held.

The EIS will evaluate potential impacts from construction and operation of the proposed roadway including, but not limited to, the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation improvement), air, and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facilities, water quality impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to water of the United States including wetlands from right-of-way encroachment, impacts to historic and archaeological resources, impacts to floodplains, and impacts and/or potential displacements to residents and businesses.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and Local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. 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 FHWA at the address 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.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2001-11060]

#### Availability of an Environmental Assessment for the Certification of Safety Auditors, Safety Investigators, and Safety Inspectors Interim Final Rule

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announces the availability of the Environmental Assessment for the Certification of Safety Auditors, Safety Investigators, and Safety Inspectors interim final rule (67 FR 12776, Mar. 19, 2002) (commonly referred to as the "Certification" rule). This announcement is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508); and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.1C, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, dated September 18, 1979, as amended July 13, 1982, and July 30, 1985. The Certification rule was one of three interim final rules set aside by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit on January 16, 2003. The court concluded that FMCSA failed to comply with statutory environmental impact analysis requirements in developing these rules. Accordingly, FMCSA has analyzed the potential environmental impacts from implementation of the Certification rule. The agency has concluded that implementing the rule's requirements would have no adverse environmental consequences and in fact would be likely to have a positive, if minimal, impact on the affected environment.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before November 3, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by DOT DMS Docket Number FMCSA-2001-11060 by any of the following methods:

- Web site: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.
- Fax: 1-202-493-2251.
- Mail: Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Nassif Building,

Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

**Instructions:** All submissions must include the agency name and docket number for this notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://dms.dot.gov> including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading for further information.

**Docket:** For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> and/or Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**Privacy Act:** Anyone may search the electronic form of all comments received into any of DOT's dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or of the person signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, or other entity). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 19477, Apr. 11, 2000). This statement is also available at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Pat Woodman, Chief of the Enforcement and Compliance Division (MC-ECE), (202) 366-9699, FMCSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Sec. 210 of the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act (MCSIA) of 1999 (Pub. L. 106-159, 113 Stat. 1748) directs that all motor carriers (both foreign and domestic) granted new operating authority must undergo a safety audit within 18 months of commencing operations in interstate commerce in the United States [49 U.S.C. 31144(b)]. Sec. 211 of the MCSIA requires that any safety audit conducted after December 31, 2002, be performed by a certified motor carrier safety auditor [49 U.S.C. 31148(b)]. The legislation also gives the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) authority to decertify a safety auditor and extend the December 31, 2002, compliance deadline [49 U.S.C. 31148 (e) and (c)]. On July 17, 2003, the Secretary notified the Senate Committee