

Estimated Annual Hour Burden:
21,749.

Shauniece Carter,
Interim Agency Clearance Officer.
[FR Doc. 2025-17539 Filed 9-10-25; 8:45 am]
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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

[Disaster Declaration #21276; LOUISIANA Disaster Number LA-20011 Declaration of Economic Injury]

Administrative Declaration of an Economic Injury Disaster for the State of Louisiana

AGENCY: U.S. Small Business Administration.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This is a notice of an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) declaration for the State of Louisiana dated September 5, 2025.

Incident: Smitty’s Supply Fire.

DATES: Issued on September 5, 2025.

Incident Period: August 22, 2025 through August 25, 2025.

Economic Injury (EIDL) Loan Application Deadline Date: June 6, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Visit the MySBA Loan Portal at <https://lending.sba.gov> to apply for a disaster assistance loan.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Talarico, Office of Disaster Recovery & Resilience, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW, Suite 6050, Washington, DC 20416, (202) 205-6734.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that as a result of the Administrator’s EIDL declaration, applications for disaster loans may be submitted online using the MySBA Loan Portal <https://lending.sba.gov> or other locally announced locations. Please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center by email at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or by phone at 1-800-659-2955 for further assistance.

The following areas have been determined to be adversely affected by the disaster:

Primary Parish: Tangipahoa.

Contiguous Parishes/Counties:

- Louisiana: Jefferson, Livingston, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. John The Baptist, St. Tammany, Washington.
- Mississippi: Amite, Pike.

The Interest Rates are:

	Percent
Business and Small Agricultural Cooperatives without Credit Available Elsewhere	4.000
Non-Profit Organizations without Credit Available Elsewhere	3.625

The number assigned to this disaster for economic injury is 212760.

The States which received an EIDL Declaration are Louisiana, Mississippi.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 59008)

(Authority: 13 CFR 1234.3(b).)

James Stallings,

Associate Administrator, Office of Disaster Recovery & Resilience.

[FR Doc. 2025-17496 Filed 9-10-25; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 12820]

Notice of Public Meeting in Preparation for International Maritime Organization A 34

The Department of State will conduct a public meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, both in-person at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC, and via teleconference through Microsoft Teams. The primary purpose of the meeting is to prepare for the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) 34th Session of the Assembly (A 34) to be held at IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom from Monday, November 24, 2025 to Wednesday, December 03, 2025.

Members of the public may participate up to the capacity of the teleconference line, which can handle 500 participants or up to the seating capacity of the room if attending in-person. The meeting location will be the United States Coast Guard Headquarters, and the teleconference line will be provided to those who RSVP. To RSVP, participants should contact the meeting coordinator, LCDR Emily Sysko, by email at LCDR.Emily.T.Sysko@uscg.mil. LCDR Sysko will provide access information for in-person and virtual attendance.

The agenda items to be considered at A 34 include:

- Adoption of the agenda;
- Rules of Procedure of the Assembly;
- Election of the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly;
- Application of Article 61 of the IMO Convention—Report of the Council to the Assembly on any requests by Members for waiver;

- Establishment of the committees of the Assembly;
- Consideration of the reports of the committees of the Assembly;
- Report of the Council to the Assembly on the work of the Organization since the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly;
- Strategy, planning and reform;
- IMO Member State Audit Scheme;
- Consolidated text of the IMO Convention;
- Enhancement of Multilingualism;
- Consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Maritime Safety Committee;
- Consideration fo the reports and recommendations of the Legal Committee;
- Consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Marine Environment Protection Committee;
- Consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Technical Cooperation Committee;
- Consideration of the reports and recommendation of the Facilitation Committee;
- Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 and the 1996 Protocol thereto: report on the performance of Secretariat functions and other duties;
- Resource management;
- IMO Number Scheme;
- Global maritime training institutions;
- External relations; report on the status of the conventions;
- Election of Member of the Council, as provided for in Articles 16 and 17 of the IMO Convention;
- Election of Member of the IMO Staff Pension Committee;
- Date and place of the thirty fifth regular session of the Assembly;
- Supplementary agenda items.

Please note: The IMO may, on short notice, adjust the A 34 agenda to accommodate the constraints associated with the virtual meeting format. Although no changes to the agenda are anticipated, if any are necessary, they will be provided to those who RSVP.

Those who plan to participate may contact the meeting coordinator, LCDR Emily Sysko, by email at Emily.T.Sysko@uscg.mil or by phone at 202-372-1376 or in writing at 2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, ATTN: LCDR Emily Sysko, 2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, Stop 7509, Washington, DC 20593-7509, by October 16, 2025. Members of the public needing reasonable accommodation should advise LCDR Emily Sysko no later than October 16, 2025. Requests made after that date will be considered but might not be possible to fulfill.

Additional information regarding this and other IMO public meetings may be found at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/IMO>.

(Authority: 22 U.S.C. 2656 and 5 U.S.C. 552.)

Emily C. Miletello,

Coast Guard Liaison Officer, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2025-17437 Filed 9-10-25; 8:45 am]

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. EP 782]

Petition for Rulemaking—Amendments to Regulations Governing Ex Parte Communications

On May 16, 2025, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) filed a petition for rulemaking asking the Board to institute a proceeding to revise and streamline the rules governing ex parte communications set forth in 49 CFR part 1102. (Pet. 1.) AAR contends that revisions to the Board's regulations will improve stakeholder engagement and make it easier for the agency to process matters efficiently while maintaining transparency and fairness. (*Id.*) AAR proposes several changes to the ex parte rules aimed at removing "unnecessarily strict regulations." (Pet. 2.) In response to the petition, the Board received two replies. After consideration of the petition and the replies received, the Board concludes that a proceeding should be opened to consider changes to the rules governing ex parte communications. Accordingly, the Board will grant AAR's petition to the extent that it requests that the Board open a proceeding.

Background

Summary of the Petition. AAR argues that its proposal will facilitate more effective communications between stakeholders and the Board, encourage timely and efficient decision making, and preserve transparency and fairness. (*Id.* at 2.) AAR also asserts that each of the proposals in its petition is consistent with practices at other federal agencies. (*Id.* at 6–8, 10–11, 15.) In its petition, AAR first proposes that the Board clarify that certain forms of communication are not ex parte communications by revising the regulatory language to state that: (1) the ban on ex parte communications does not prohibit communications regarding routine, procedural matters (*id.* at 6); (2) communications with Board staff concerning submitted evidence and compliance with orders seeking additional information are permissible,

subject to the disclosure requirements in 49 CFR 1102.2(g)(4)¹ (*id.* at 6–7); and (3) ex parte communications are permitted in proceedings where there is only one "party" as defined in 49 CFR 1101.2(d)² (*id.* at 7–9). AAR argues that its proposals would provide clarity to both the public and the Board with regard to what types of ex parte communications are permissible. (*Id.* at 6.) AAR also asks the Board to revise the regulatory text to permit ex parte communications in transactions involving Class I railroads, subject to the disclosure requirements in 49 CFR 1102.2(g)(4).³ (Pet. 9–10.) AAR asserts that allowing ex parte communications in these transactions has the potential to expedite proceedings, and argues that the documentation processes in section 1102.2(g)(4) are sufficient to "preserve fairness and transparency." (*Id.* at 10.) Finally, AAR asks the Board to adjust the ex parte meeting rules in 49 CFR 1102.2(g)(1) by revising the regulatory text to allow: (1) ex parte communications between the public and Board staff, subject to the same requirements governing communications with Board Members; and (2) ex parte communications for a prescribed period of time after reply comments are filed.⁴ (Pet. 11–15.) AAR contends that the existing processes are inefficient and inhibit potentially useful communications between parties and the agency and argues that the proposals in its petition would provide the Board with greater flexibility in future proceedings. (*Id.* at 12–14.)

Comments Received. The Board received replies to AAR's petition on June 5, 2025, from the Private Railcar Food and Beverage Association (PRFBA) and the Freight Rail Customer Alliance (FRCA). FRCA and PRFBA oppose AAR's petition, arguing that AAR's proposal is unnecessary and likely to reduce transparency in Board proceedings. (FRCA Reply 1–2; PRFBA

Reply 1.) FRCA and PRFBA also argue that Board's regulations already allow status and procedural inquiries because 49 CFR 1102.2(a)(5) defines "ex parte communications" as "an oral or written communication that concerns the merits or substantive outcome of a pending proceeding." (FRCA Reply 1; PRFBA Reply 1.)

FRCA further argues that the other proposed clarifications in AAR's proposal are unnecessary. (FRCA Reply 1.) FRCA asserts that Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance (OPAGAC) staff already accommodates parties' needs for clarifying communications regarding submitted evidence and Board orders and questions the need for ex parte communications in proceedings involving only one party because such proceedings are typically adjudications that must take into account the interest of the public. (*Id.* at 1–2.) FRCA further argues that direct access to Board staff in uncontested proceedings may reveal information that proves beneficial in contested matters, thereby creating additional fairness concerns. (*Id.* at 2.) FRCA raises similar concerns about AAR's proposal to allow ex parte communications in transactions involving Class I railroads, arguing AAR's proposal is inappropriate due to what FRCA argues is the larger impact on shippers, competitors, and the public interest. (*Id.*) Finally, FRCA contends that extending deadlines and expanding staff roles for ex parte communications in informal rulemaking proceedings would encourage more well-resourced participants to save their strongest arguments and responses for direct communications with the agency, rather than presenting them in written comments that the public can review and respond to. (*Id.* at 2.)

PRFBA also argues that AAR's proposal is inconsistent with the policy reasons underlying the existing limitations on ex parte communications. (PRFBA Reply 1.) PRFBA asserts that the Board's ex parte communication rules are intended to promote impartial decision making, ensure due process in Board proceedings, and maintain public trust in the Board's adjudicatory system. (*Id.* at 2.) PRFBA contends that because ex parte communications allow one party to discuss issues or present information without giving the opposing party an opportunity to respond, and because engaging in ex parte communications creates an appearance of impropriety, AAR's proposal is inconsistent with these policy goals. (*Id.*)

¹ Section 1102.2(g)(4) outlines the disclosure requirements for ex parte communications with Board Members that are permitted, under certain circumstances, in informal rulemaking proceedings.

² Section 1101.2(d) defines a "party" as a complainant, defendant, applicant, respondent, protestant, intervener, or petitioner in any proceeding, or other persons permitted or directed by the Board to participate in a proceeding.

³ This proposal would reverse the Board's policy, consistent with the discretion afforded to the Board in 49 U.S.C. 11324(f), of not entertaining ex parte communications in railroad merger proceedings. See *Petition of Fieldston Co. to Establish Proc. Regarding Ex Parte Commc'ns in R.R. Merger Procs.*, 1 S.T.B. 1083, 1085–86 (1996).

⁴ 49 CFR 1102.2(g)(1) permits ex parte meetings until 20 days before the deadline for reply comments set forth in the notice of proposed rulemaking, and requires the Board to delegate participation in order for Board staff to attend ex parte meetings.