significance, and, further, that their temporary exhibition or display within the United States as aforementioned is in the national interest. I have ordered that Public Notice of these determinations be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reed Liriano, Program Coordinator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202–632–6471; email: *section2459@state.gov*). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PD, 2200 C Street NW (SA–5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522–0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.;* 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, Delegation of Authority No. 236–3 of August 28, 2000, and Delegation of Authority No. 523 of December 22, 2021.

Sherry C. Keneson-Hall,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2026–22054 Filed 10–28–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–05–P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. MCF 21158]

TBL Group, Inc.—Acquisition of Control—Horizon Motor Coach, Inc.

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice tentatively approving and authorizing finance transaction.

SUMMARY: TBL Group, Inc. (TBL Group), a noncarrier holding company that controls multiple interstate motor passenger carriers, has filed an application to acquire control of the member interests in or the primary assets of Horizon Motor Coach, Inc. (Horizon), a federally regulated motor passenger carrier. The Board is tentatively approving and authorizing the transaction. If no opposing comments are timely filed, this notice will be the final Board action.

DATES: Comments must be filed by December 14, 2026. If any comments are filed, TBL Group may file a reply by December 28, 2026. If no opposing comments are filed by December 14, 2026, this notice shall be effective on December 15, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments, referring to Docket No. MCF 21158, may be filed with the Board either via e-filing on the Board's website or in writing addressed to: Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, one copy of any comments filed with the Board must also be sent to TBL Group's representative: Andrew K. Light, Scopelitis, Garvin, Light, Hanson & Feary, P.C., 10 W Market Street, Suite 1400, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Ziehm at (202) 918–5462. If you require an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please call (202) 245–0245.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 29, 2026, TBL Group filed an application under 49 U.S.C. 14303 and 49 CFR part 1182 for Board authority to acquire control of the member interests in or the primary assets of Horizon. (Appl. 1.) According to TBL Group, either a newly created subsidiary, TBL Newco, will acquire and operate substantially all of the motor carrier assets of Horizon, or TBL Group will directly acquire the Horizon corporate entity. (*See id.* at 1–2, 11.) The application explains that in either case, the services currently provided by Horizon will continue to be provided after the proposed transaction. (*Id.* at 10–11.)

The application states that TBL Group is a Texas corporation, headquartered in Houston, Tex. (*Id.* at 2.) TBL Group asserts that it is not a federally regulated carrier but that it controls six interstate passenger motor carriers (Affiliated Regulated Carriers): GBJ, Inc. (GBJ), Echo Tours & Charters, LP (Echo Tours); Echo East Coast Transportation LLC (Echo East); Echo Windy City, LLC (Echo Windy); Reston Limousine & Travel Service, Inc. (Reston); and Echo Nevada, LLC (Echo Nevada).[1] (*Id.* at 2–6.)[2]

TBL Group states that GBJ is a Texas corporation doing business as Echo AFC Transportation, AFC Transportation, and Echo AFC Medical Transport that primarily provides charter and contract shuttle services for companies, employers, non-profits, schools, tour operators and transit and paratransit services for other transportation authorities in the metropolitan area of Houston, but also provides interstate charter passenger transportation service. (*Id.* at 3.)

TBL Group describes Echo Tours as a Texas limited partnership doing business as Echo Transportation that primarily provides charter and contract shuttle services for companies, non-profits, schools, and tour operators in the metropolitan area of Dallas, Tex., but also provides interstate charter passenger transportation. (*Id.* at 4.)

Echo East is described as a Texas limited liability company doing business as Echo East Coast Transportation that primarily provides interstate and intrastate contract shuttle and charter motor carrier passenger services in the metropolitan area of Jacksonville, Fla. (*Id.* at 4–5.)

TBL Group describes Echo Windy as a Texas limited liability company doing business as Echo Windy City Transportation that primarily provides intrastate limousine and premium car passenger charter service in the metropolitan area of Chicago, Ill., but can also provide interstate limousine and premium car passenger services. (*Id.* at 5.)

Reston is described as a Virginia corporation that provides interstate and intrastate limousine, shuttle, and charter passenger services in the metropolitan area of Washington, DC (*Id.* at 5–6.)

Lastly, TBL Group describes Echo Nevada as a Nevada limited liability company, doing business as Presidential Transportation, that provides limousine, shuttle, and charter passenger service in the metropolitan area of Las Vegas, Nev. (*Id.* at 6.)

Additionally, TBL Group states that it recently obtained authority to acquire the following additional carriers: BTM Coaches, Inc. (BTM Coaches); Chicago Classic Coach, LLC (Classic); and Escot Bus Lines, L.L.C. (Escot). (*Id.* at 2 nn.1–3 (citing *TBL Grp., Inc.—Acquis. of Control—BTM Coaches, Inc.*, MCF 21138 (STB served Sep. 24, 2025); *TBL Grp., Inc.—Acquis. of Control—Chi. Classic Coach, LLC*, MCF 21144 (STB served May 7, 2026); *TBL Grp., Inc.—Acquis. of Control—Escot Bus Lines, L.L.C.*, MCF 21152 (STB served June 26, 2026).) According to TBL Group, its authorized acquisitions of BTM Coaches and Classic may not close. (Appl. 2 nn.1–2.) TBL Group further states that it has not yet closed its acquisition of Escot. (*Id.* at 2 n.3.)

According to TBL Group, Horizon is a Georgia corporation formed in 1997.

[1] Additional information about these motor carriers, including principal places of business, U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) numbers, motor carrier numbers, USDOT safety fitness ratings, fleet compositions, and driver counts, can be found in the application. (*See id.*, Ex. A.)

[2] TBL Group also lists four unregulated affiliates that it controls, which it states do not require interstate passenger motor carrier authority. (*See id.* at 2–3, 6–7.) The Affiliated Regulated Carriers and the four unregulated affiliates will be collectively referred to as ''Affiliates.''

(*Id.* at 7.) The application indicates that Horizon is a provider of traditional charter motor coach services for group travel, meeting and convention shuttle services, team travel services, school group travel, government and military employee travel, and other general charter bus services. (*Id.* at 7–8.)

TBL Group describes Horizon as a small charter service provider in the metropolitan area of Augusta, Ga., which includes a western portion of the state of South Carolina. (*Id.* at 8.) Horizon's headquarters and sole terminal are located at 949 Appling Harlem Road, Harlem, GA 30814. (*Id.*)

TBL Group also provides details about Horizon's USDOT number, FMCSA docket number, and safety rating. (*Id.*) [3] In its operations, Horizon utilizes approximately 16 motor coaches, 4 mini-buses, 19 shuttle buses, and 3 passenger vans, while employing approximately 62 drivers. (*Id.*)

TBL states that the sole shareholder of Horizon, Alvin K. Harris, is an individual resident of the state of Georgia, who has no ownership interest in any other passenger motor carrier holding interstate motor carrier authority. (*Id.*)

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), the Board must approve and authorize a transaction that it finds consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least (1) the effect of the proposed transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public, (2) the total fixed charges resulting from the proposed transaction, and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees. TBL Group has submitted the information required by 49 CFR 1182.2, including information demonstrating that the proposed transaction is consistent with the public interest under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), *see* 49 CFR 1182.2(a)(7), and a jurisdictional statement under 49 U.S.C. 14303(g) that the aggregate gross operating revenues of the involved carriers exceeded $2 million during a consecutive 12-month period ending not more than six months before the date of the agreement of the parties, *see* 49 CFR 1182.2(a)(5).

TBL Group does not expect the proposed transaction to have any detrimental impact on the adequacy of transportation services available to the public in Horizon's service area. (Appl. 10.) TBL Group anticipates that services available to the traveling public will remain as they are now and may increase as additional demand is anticipated in the service area. (*Id.*) TBL Group states that for the foreseeable future, the services currently provided by Horizon will continue to be provided after the transaction either (i) by TBL Newco in the event of an asset acquisition, or (ii) by Horizon in the event Horizon is acquired directly by TBL Group. (*Id.* at 10–11.) If consummated, the proposed transaction will bring the Horizon assets under the control of TBL Group, which states that it is experienced in most of the same types of services provided by Horizon, being charter motor coach services for group, school and team travel, and meeting, event and convention shuttle services, and transit services. (*Id.* at 11.) TBL Group argues that the transaction, combined with the passenger carrier management capacity of TBL Group, is expected to result in improved operating efficiencies, increased equipment utilization rates, and cost savings derived from economies of scale within TBL Group's Affiliates, all of which will help to ensure the provision of adequate service to the public. (*Id.*) The addition of Horizon's operations to TBL Group's organization will also serve to enhance the viability of TBL Group's organization and its Affiliates. (*Id.*) TBL Group asserts that the continued viability of TBL Group and its Affiliates assures the continued availability of adequate passenger transportation service to the public. (*Id.*)

TBL Group states that the proposed transaction will increase fixed charges in the form of interest expense, because funds will be borrowed to assist in the financing of the transaction. (*Id.* at 11–12.) However, TBL Group states that such an increase will not impact the provision of transportation services to the public. (*Id.* at 12.) With respect to employee interests, TBL Group states that it intends to continue the existing operations of Horizon, and that under either acquisition scenario, TBL Group will offer employment to substantially all current employees of Horizon without any negative changes in compensation levels and/or benefits. (*Id.*) However, Horizon acknowledges that staffing redundancies could potentially result in limited downsizing of back-office and/or managerial level personnel. (*Id.*) TBL Group states that it is contemplated that Mr. Harris, the Chief Executive Officer of Horizon, will continue as an employee of the business for some period of time after completion of the transaction, thus further assuring a smooth transition of the business. (*Id.*)

TBL Group states that there is strong demand for passenger surface transportation in Horizon's service area due to both past and expected future population and economic growth in the Augusta Metropolitan Area. (*Id.* at 13.) According to the application, Horizon currently competes directly with many other charter bus service providers within Horizon's service area, including providers such as Capital Tours, Lewis Bus Line, SC Coach LLC, and SC Express LLC. (*Id.* at 13–14.) In addition to direct competition with other charter service providers, the application states that there are a growing number of charter bus brokerage companies (companies that arrange transportation and charter services), including Augusta Charter Bus Company, CharterUp, Falcon Charter Bus, GoGo Charters, and National Charter Bus, that compete with all of the charter service providers. (*Id.* at 14.) In addition, TBL Group states that Horizon and all other similar surface passenger service providers also compete with scheduled passenger shuttle services in certain areas and the passenger transportation network providers (*e.g.*, Uber and Lyft). (*Id.*)

TBL Group also notes that Horizon's service area is geographically dispersed from service areas of the Affiliated Regulated Carriers, and there is no known overlap in customer bases between the Affiliated Regulated Carriers and Horizon. (*Id.*) The Board has also considered the geographic areas of the carriers TBL Group has recently obtained authority to acquire but where the acquisitions have not been consummated. As noted above, TBL Group obtained authority in Docket No. MCF 21152 to acquire Escot. (*See id.* at 2 n.3.) According to that docket, Escot provides scheduled intercity transit service within various states, including Georgia, under the FlixBus mobility platform, but Escot's primary service area appears to be central Florida. *See TBL Group, Inc.—Acquis. of Control—Escot Bus Lines, L.L.C.*, MCF 21152, slip op. at 2–3. Horizon, on the other hand, primarily serves Augusta, and it therefore appears that any overlap between Horizon and Escot is minimal. Additionally, both companies face competition from third parties. Neither of the other carriers in the authorized but unconsummated acquisitions operate in the geographic areas served by Horizon.

Based on TBL Group's representations, the Board finds that the transaction proposed in the application is consistent with the public interest. The application will be tentatively approved and authorized. If any opposing comments are timely filed, these findings will be deemed vacated and, unless a final decision can be made on the record as developed, a procedural schedule will be adopted to

[3] Horizon is an authorized intrastate passenger motor carrier in the states of Georgia and South Carolina and has a Safety Rating of Satisfactory. (*Id.*)

reconsider the application. *See* 49 CFR 1182.6. If no opposing comments are filed by the expiration of the comment period, this notice will take effect automatically and will be the final Board action in this proceeding.

This action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c).

Board decisions and notices are available at *www.stb.gov*.

It is ordered:

1. The proposed transaction is approved and authorized, subject to the filing of opposing comments.

2. If opposing comments are timely filed, the findings made in this notice will be deemed vacated.

3. This notice will be effective December 15, 2026, unless opposing comments are filed by December 14, 2026. If any comments are filed, TBL Group may file a reply by December 28, 2026.

4. A copy of this notice will be served on: (1) the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590; (2) the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530; and (3) the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the General Counsel, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

5. This notice will be published in the **Federal Register**.

Decided: October 26, 2026.

By the Board, Anika S. Cooper, Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel.

Tammy Lowery,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2026–22035 Filed 10–28–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–01–P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. FD 36932]

Channel Pacific Railroad—Operation Exemption—In West Sacramento, Yolo County, Cal.

On May 12, 2026, Channel Pacific Railroad (CHPR), a noncarrier, filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to operate approximately 2,132 feet of track (the Line) located in a terminal facility (the Facility) in West Sacramento, Yolo County, Cal. Notice of CHPR's exemption was served and published in the **Federal Register** on May 28, 2026 (91 FR 31318) (*May 28 Notice*), and the notice became effective on June 11, 2026.

On July 31, 2026, the City of West Sacramento, Cal., and the Sacramento-Yolo Port District (together, the Sacramento-area Government Entities or SGEs) filed a petition to reject the verified notice, revoke the exemption, or declare the exemption void ab initio (the Petition).[1] CHPR filed a reply to the Petition on August 20, 2026 (Reply). For the reasons discussed below, the Board will decline to institute a revocation proceeding and deny the Petition. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(d), the Board's decision will be published in the **Federal Register**.

Background

The Line consists of two tracks that begin at a point of connection with a rail line owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) at the northern boundary of the Facility, immediately south of Channel Drive, and extends southward to ending points immediately north of the Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel.[2] (Verified Notice 3; *see id.,* Ex. A (map).) The Line has no mileposts and is owned by CHPR's noncarrier corporate affiliate, Greencycle Properties, LLC (Greencycle).[3] (Verified Notice 1.)

According to the verified notice, CHPR and Greencycle have agreed that CHPR would ''acquire the right to conduct railroad common carrier service over'' the Line and that CHPR would ''assume responsibility for the provision of associated commodity-handling and transloading services within'' the Facility. (*Id.* at 2.) CHPR asserts that it is leasing the Line and Facility from Greencycle under a lease effective July 1, 2026. (Reply 26–27.) CHPR states that it will deliver ''comprehensive, railroad-oriented transportation services within'' the Facility, ''including, among other things, the inbound and outbound transportation of railroad-borne shipments.'' (Verified Notice 2–3; *see* Reply 11–12 (describing its intended services package to involve ''comprehensive transload and logistics services,'' including ''[t]he offloading, temporary storage, and reloading of bulk commodities into motor carriers for local distribution'').) CHPR further asserts that it has ''communicated its short line operations plans with UP'' and that UP has indicated willingness ''to coordinate with CHPR on its common carrier implementation and subsequent operating plans.'' (Verified Notice 4; *see* Reply 13 (noting that CHPR and UP executed a formal interchange agreement, effective July 14, 2026).)

The *May 28 Notice* provided that petitions for stay were due by June 4, 2026; no stay requests were filed. By decision served June 10, 2026 (*June 10 Decision*), the Board waived the 60-day advance notice requirement under 49 CFR 1150.32(e) and established that CHPR's exemption would become effective on June 11, 2026.

On July 31, 2026, the SGEs filed the Petition, arguing that the Board should reject the verified notice, revoke the exemption, or declare the exemption void ab initio. On August 20, 2026, CHPR replied to the petition.

Preliminary Matter

On September 8, 2026, the SGEs filed a request for leave to file a rebuttal to CHPR's reply. In the filing, the SGEs assert, among other things, that the reply contains factual inaccuracies and is misleading. On September 23, 2026, CHPR filed an opposition to the SGEs' request for leave. The Board's rules do not permit a reply to a reply, *see* 49 CFR 1104.13(c),[4] and the SGEs' filing, which they characterize as a ''limited rebuttal,'' largely repeats or expands on arguments and information presented in the Petition. Accordingly, the SGEs' request for leave to file a rebuttal will be denied.

Discussion and Conclusions

As noted above, CHPR's notice of exemption has already become effective, with no party having sought a stay of the effective date. Because the exemption is already in effect, the Petition—which seeks rejection and revocation—will be treated as a petition to revoke. *See Middletown & N.J. R.R.—Lease & Operation Exemption—Norfolk S. Ry.,* FD 35412, slip op. at 2 n.1 (STB served Dec. 23, 2010). Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(d), ''an already-effective exemption may be revoked, in whole or in part, if regulation is necessary to carry out the [Rail Transportation Policy (RTP)] of 49 U.S.C. 10101.'' *Mid-Atl. Gateway LLC—Lease & Operation Exemption—Certain Rail Line Assets of J.P. Rail, Inc.,* FD 36644, slip op. at 2 (STB served Feb. 15, 2023).

[1] The Petition is styled both as a petition ''to reject or revoke exemption,'' (Pet. 1), and a petition ''to revoke exemption pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) or declare exemption void ab initio pursuant to 49 CFR 1150.42(c),'' (*id.* at 2).

[2] CHPR states that a third track, which is excluded from the linear footage of the Line, will be spur track pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10906. (Verified Notice 3; *see id.,* Ex. A (map).)

[3] According to CHPR, it and Greencycle are both controlled by Teichert Inc. (Teichert), a noncarrier that does not own any other rail carriers. (Verified Notice 1.)

[4] As a general matter, to promote the orderly and efficient administration of cases, the Board is more strictly enforcing 49 CFR 1104.13(c). *Kan. & Okla. R.R.—Lease & Operation Exemption with Interchange Commitment—Union Pac. R.R.,* FD 36849, slip op. at 7 (STB served Mar. 20, 2026) (citing *Sunflower State Indus. Ry.—Pet. for Declaratory Ord.,* FD 36714 (Sub-No. 1), slip op. at 2 n.3 (STB served Mar. 28, 2025)).