

2021 Current Fiscal Year Report: Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee

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1. Department or Agency

Surface Transportation Board

2. Fiscal Year

2021

3. Committee or Subcommittee

Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee

3b. GSA Committee No.

33452

4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?

No

5. Current Charter

09/20/2019

6. Expected Renewal Date

09/20/2021

7. Expected Term Date

8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?

No

8b. Specific Termination Authority

8c. Actual Term Date

9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year

Continue

10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?

No

10b. Legislation Pending?

Not Applicable

11. Establishment Authority

Agency Authority

12. Specific Establishment Authority

Establishment of a Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee, STB Ex Parte No. 670

13.

Effective Date

07/17/2007

14.

Committee Type

Continuing

14c.

Presidential?

No

15. Description of Committee

National Policy Issue Advisory Board

16a. Total Number of Reports

No Reports for this Fiscal Year

17a. Open Meetings and Dates

1

Purpose

Bi-Annual RETAC meeting

Start

10/07/2020

End

- 10/07/2020

Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 1

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$13,000.00	\$13,700.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$58,000.00	\$61,000.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00

18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	\$1,700.00	\$2,000.00
18d. Total	\$72,700.00	\$76,700.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	72,635.00	76,300.00

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

The Committee accomplishes its purpose by meeting at least twice a year to review industry sector reports related to rail transportation of energy resources and to discuss current and emerging issues.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

The Committee currently consists of a maximum of 25 voting members, excluding the governmental representatives. This includes 5 representatives from the Class I railroads; 3 representatives from Class II and III railroads; 3 representatives from coal producers; 5 representatives from electric utilities (including one rural electric cooperative and one state- or municipally-owned utility); 4 representatives from biofuel feedstock growers or providers, and biofuel refiners, processors and distributors; 2 representatives from private car owners, car lessors, or car manufacturers; 1 representative from the petroleum shipping industry; and up to 2 other representatives with relevant experience but not necessarily affiliated with one of the aforementioned sectors. The three Members of the Surface Transportation Board serve as ex officio (non-voting) members of the Committee.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

The RETAC charter directs the Committee to meet no less than twice a year. Through 2009, the Committee met quarterly. Starting in 2010, and going forward, it has met twice a year, typically in March and September. The Committee provides an important forum for representatives of different elements of the energy transportation supply chain to meet and explore issues involving the transportation of energy resources. Regular reports on energy supply chain performance measures and updates from members of the different industry segments represented on the Committee ensure that the work of the Committee remains timely and consistent with the the Committee's purpose and goals.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

The Board views the reliability of the nation's energy supply as crucial to this nation's economic and national security, and the transportation by rail of coal and other energy resources as a vital link in the energy supply chain. The Board established RETAC as an advisory committee consisting of a balanced cross-section of energy and rail industry stakeholders to provide independent, candid policy advice to the Board and to foster open, effective communication among the affected interests on issues such as rail

performance; capacity constraints; infrastructure planning and development; and effective coordination among suppliers, carriers, and users of energy resources.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

N/A

21. Remarks

The Board has continued to support RETAC as a forum that facilitates industry discussions to improve long-term demand forecasts and promotes dialogue on rail transportation issues of importance within the energy supply chain.

Designated Federal Officer

Kristen H. Nunnally DFO

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Ewers, Steve	05/01/2019	08/31/2022	Class I Railroads	Representative Member
Fuchs, Patrick	01/01/2019	08/31/2024	Board Member	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Oberman, Martin	01/01/2019	08/31/2024	Board Member	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Obie, Phillip	09/01/2018	08/31/2021	Utilities	Representative Member
Owens, David	09/01/2018	08/31/2021	Utilities	Representative Member
Regis, Emily	05/01/2019	08/31/2022	Utilities	Representative Member
Whalen, Bette	09/01/2018	08/31/2021	Utilities	Representative Member

Number of Committee Members Listed: 7

Narrative Description

This Committee provides a forum for the discussion of emerging issues and concerns regarding the transportation by rail of energy resources, particularly, but not necessarily limited to coal, ethanol, petroleum, and other biofuels. The Committee must, on request by the Board, and may, on request by the public, suggest to the Board appropriate policies or regulations with regard to the efficiency and reliability of the transportation of energy resources by rail.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

- Improvements to health or safety
- Trust in government
- Major policy changes
- Advance in scientific research
- Effective grant making
- Improved service delivery
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements

Other

Outcome Comments

Not Applicable

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

None

Unable to Determine

Under \$100,000

\$100,000 - \$500,000

\$500,001 - \$1,000,000

\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000

\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000

Over \$10,000,000

Cost Savings Other

Cost Savings Comments

Not Applicable

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

8

Number of Recommendations Comments

RETAC, which was established in late 2007, issued a Capacity Planning White Paper in March 2009. The paper addressed the following issues: (1) How can large investments for energy source development, rail infrastructure, locomotives and rolling stock be made when the political and regulatory climate create so much uncertainty regarding the future use of coal as a primary fuel source in electric generation and renewable fuels as an additional energy source? (2) What is the nature and extent of the reserve capacity that railroads need in order to meet surges in volume and/or geographic and modal changes in sourcing regions for domestic energy transportation needs? (3) What mechanism is necessary to ensure that investments in capacity are made where and when needed? The full text of the white paper is available on the Board's website at this link:<http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/docs/RETAC/Capacity%20White%20Paper%203-4-09.pdf>. Included in the white paper are approximately 8 recommendations of varying specificity directed to the STB. RETAC issued a Best Practices White Paper in September 2010, which focused on determining how the entire energy supply chain could be improved by

identifying and analyzing best practices among the participants (coal producers, railroads, and electric utilities). The full text of the white paper is available on the Board's website at this link:

<http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/docs/RETAC/2010/September/Best%20Practices%20White%20Paper>

The white paper did not include any recommendations directed specifically at the agency, but recommended that the information in the report be discussed in as many forums as possible.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

50%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

RETAC's activities have provided the Board an important forum and source of information on issues affecting the rail transportation of energy resources. Of the eight recommendations referred to above, STB is implementing one directly (continued support of RETAC as a mechanism for promoting industry dialogue, discussion and forecasting within the energy supply chain), and implementing several others indirectly—(1) promoting the development of industry best practices, (2) promoting the development of supply chain monitoring and reporting, and (3) facilitating methodologies within the energy supply chain to determine necessary levels and locations of needed and justified reserve transportation capacity—by encouraging the work of RETAC in the areas of best practices, performance measures, and capacity planning, respectively.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

25%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

One of the white-paper recommendations was to promote longer term policies that allow the railroads to earn sufficient revenues to permit them to build up to the reasonable reserve target levels. The Board implements this policy recommendation, in part, by carrying out in its decisionmaking process, as appropriate, the statutory policy directive of allowing rail carriers to earn adequate revenues. Another recommendation is to "develop methodologies to ensure STB regulatory action supports adequate transportation capacity to respond to reasonable changes in demand or source regions." The Board implements this policy recommendation, in part, by carrying out in its decisionmaking process, as appropriate, the statutory policy directive to "ensure the development and continuation of a sound rail transportation system . . . to meet the needs of the public."

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes No Not Applicable

Agency Feedback Comments

As ex officio members of the Committee, the Board Members routinely attend and participate in RETAC meetings and have the opportunity to provide informal feedback to the Committee. In addition, Board members provided feedback via periodic individual conferences with the RETAC Co-chairs.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Comments

Not Applicable

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

Not Applicable

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Comments

N/A