

included in TVA's financial statement report.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Request for Public Comment With Respect to the Annual National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers

AGENCY: Office of the United States
Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 303 of the Trade and Tariff Act of 1984, as amended, USTR is required to publish annually the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE). With this notice, the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is requesting interested parties to assist it in identifying significant barriers to U.S. exports of goods, services and overseas direct investment for inclusion in the NTE. Particularly important are impediments materially affecting the actual and potential financial performance of an industry sector. The TPSC invites written comments that provide views relevant to the issues to be examined in preparing the NTE.

DATES: Public comments are due not later than Wednesday, November 16, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Submissions by electronic mail: FR0508@USTRE.OP.GOV. Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, (202) 395-6143. The public is strongly encouraged to submit documents electronically rather than by facsimile. (See requirements for submissions below.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding the report, its subject matter or procedural questions concerning submissions should be directed to Ms. Gloria Blue, Office of Policy Coordination, Office of the United States Trade Representative (202) 395-3475.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Last year's report may be found on USTR's Internet Home Page (<http://www.ustr.gov>) in the Document Library under the section on Reports/Publications. In order to ensure compliance with the statutory mandate for reporting foreign trade barriers that

are significant, we will focus particularly on those restrictions where there has been active private sector interest.

The information submitted should relate to one or more of the following ten categories of foreign trade barriers:

(1) Import policies (*e.g.*, tariffs and other import charges, quantitative restrictions, import licensing, and customs barriers);

(2) Standards, testing, labeling, and certification (including unnecessarily restrictive application of phytosanitary standards, refusal to accept U.S. manufacturers' self-certification of conformance to foreign product standards, and environmental restrictions);

(3) Government procurement (*e.g.*, "buy national" policies and closed bidding);

(4) Export subsidies (*e.g.*, export financing on preferential terms and agricultural export subsidies that displace U.S. exports in third country markets);

(5) Lack of intellectual property protection (*e.g.*, inadequate patent, copyright, and trademark regimes);

(6) Services barriers (*e.g.*, limits on the range of financial services offered by foreign financial institutions, regulation of international data flows, restrictions on the use of data processing, quotas on imports of foreign films, and barriers to the provision of services by professionals (*e.g.*, lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, nurses, etc.);

(7) Investment barriers (*e.g.*, limitations on foreign equity participation and on access to foreign government-funded R&D consortia, local content, technology transfer and export performance requirements, and restrictions on repatriation of earnings, capital, fees and royalties);

(8) Anticompetitive practices with trade effects tolerated by foreign governments (including anticompetitive activities of both state-owned and private firms that apply to services or to goods and that restrict the sale of U.S. products to any firm, not just to foreign firms that perpetuate the practices);

(9) Trade restrictions affecting electronic commerce (*e.g.*, tariff and non-tariff measures, burdensome and discriminatory regulations and standards, and discriminatory taxation); and

(10) Other barriers (*i.e.*, barriers that encompass more than one category, *e.g.*, bribery and corruption, or that affect a single sector).

As in the case of last year's NTE, we are asking that particular emphasis be placed on any practices that may violate U.S. trade agreements. We are also

interested in receiving any new or updated information pertinent to the barriers covered in last year's report as well as new information. Please note that the information not used in the NTE will be maintained for use in future negotiations.

It is most important that your submission contain estimates of the potential increase in exports that would result from the removal of the barrier, as well as a clear discussion of the method(s) by which the estimates were computed. Estimates should fall within the following value ranges: Less than \$5 million; \$5 to \$25 million; \$25 million to \$50 million; \$50 million to \$100 million; \$100 million to \$500 million; or over \$500 million. Such assessments enhance USTR's ability to conduct meaningful comparative analyses of a barrier's effect over a range of industries.

Please note that interested parties discussing barriers in more than one country should provide a separate submission (*i.e.*, one that is self-contained) for each country.

Requirements for Submissions: In order to facilitate prompt processing of submissions, USTR strongly urge and prefers electronic (e-mail) submissions in response to this notice. In the event an e-mail submission is impossible, submissions should be made by facsimile. Facsimile submissions should not exceed a maximum of 20 pages.

E-mail submissions should be single copy transmissions in English. Submissions should use the following subject line: "2006 National Trade Estimate Report—Submission by (sector, company, association). Documents must be submitted as either WordPerfect ("WPD"), MSWord ("DOC"), or text ("TXT") file. Documents should not be submitted as electronic image files or contain imbedded images (for example, "JPG", "PDF", "BMP", or "GIF"), as these type of files are generally excessively large. Supporting Documentation submitted as spreadsheets are acceptable as Quattro Pro or Excel, pre-formatted for printing on 8½ x 11 inch paper. To the extent possible, any data attachments to the submission should be included in the same file as the submission itself, and not as separate files.

Petitions will be available for public inspection by appointment with the staff of the USTR Public Reading Room, except for information granted "business confidential" status pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.6. If the submission contains business confidential information, a non-confidential version of the submission must also be submitted that indicates where

confidential information was redacted by inserting asterisks where material was deleted. In addition, the confidential submission must be clearly marked "Business Confidential" in large, bold letters at the top and bottom of every page of the documents. The public version that does not contain business confidential information must be clearly marked either "Public Version" or "Non-Confidential" in large, bold letters at the top and bottom of every page. The file name of any documents containing business confidential information attached to an e-mail transmission should begin with the characters "BC-", and the file name of the public version should begin with the characters "P-". The "P-" or "BC-" should be followed by the name of the person or party submitting the petition. Submissions by e-mail should not include separate cover letters or messages in the message area of the e-mail; information that might appear in any cover letter should be included directly in the submission. The e-mail address for submissions is FR0508@ustr.eop.gov. Public versions of all documents relating to this review will be available for review shortly after the due date by appointment in the USTR Public Reading Room, 1724 F Street, NW., Washington, DC. Availability of documents may be ascertained and appointments may be made from 9:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, by calling (202) 395-6186.

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chair, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Multiple Counties, Alabama

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 a proposed highway project that will traverse the west central section of the State of Alabama.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Joe D. Wilkerson, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, 500 Eastern Boulevard, Suite 200, Montgomery, Alabama 36117-2018, Telephone (334) 223-7370.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the State of Alabama Department of Transportation, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Project NCPD-PE02(910). The proposed action is to construct a multi-lane, limited-access roadway to provide a connecting link in the freeway/Interstate system between I-59/I-20 near the Mississippi State line and I-85 in Montgomery, Alabama. The highway will have an approximate length of 140 miles. The study area includes large parts of six Black Belt Counties (Dallas, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, and Sumter), as well as Autauga and Montgomery Counties. A new Interstate connector will improve system linkage, provide a safe and efficient transportation corridor, and enhance economic opportunities for the Black Belt and other areas in the region.

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) alternate route locations and (2) a no-action or no-build alternative.

The Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration have begun a corridor study. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments were sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies and to private organizations and citizens who previously expressed or were known to have interest in this proposal.

In addition to the early coordination already accomplished, additional meetings will be held as appropriate, and formal public hearings will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place for the meetings and hearings. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. An interagency scoping meeting was scheduled for September 22, 2005, in Selma, Alabama. 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: September 8, 2005.

Joe D. Wilkerson,

Division Administrator, Montgomery.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 658]

The 25th Anniversary of the Stagers Rail Act of 1980: A Review and Look Ahead

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board will hold a public hearing beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, October 19, 2005, at its offices in Washington, DC. The purpose of the public hearing will be to examine the impact, the effectiveness, and the future of the Stagers Rail Act of 1980 (Stagers Act). Persons wishing to speak at the hearing should notify the Board in writing.

DATES: The public hearing will take place on Wednesday, October 19, 2005. Any person wishing to speak at the hearing should file with the Board a written notice of intent to participate, and should identify the party, the proposed speaker, the time requested, and the topic(s) to be covered, as soon as possible but no later than October 7, 2005. Each speaker should also file with the Board his/her written testimony by October 12, 2005. Written submissions by interested persons who do not wish to appear at the hearing will also be due by October 12, 2005. A list of speakers and time will be published by October 14, 2005.

ADDRESSES: All notices of intent to participate and testimony may be submitted either via the Board's e-filing format or in the traditional paper format. Any person using e-filing should comply with the Board's "www.stb.dot.gov" Web site, at the "E-FILING" link. Any person submitting a filing in the traditional paper format should send an original and 10 copies of the filing to: Surface Transportation Board, Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 658, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 565-1609. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at: (800) 877-8339.]