

international government agencies. Pursuant to exemption 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2) of the Privacy Act, portions of this system are exempt from 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) and (4); (d); (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (e)(4)(I), (e)(5) and (e)(8); (f), and (g). Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(1), (k)(2), and (k)(3) of the Privacy Act, this system is exempt from the following provisions of the Privacy Act, subject to the limitations set forth in those subsections: 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (I), and (f). Exemptions from these particular subsections are justified, on a case-by-case basis to be determined at the time a request is made, for the following reasons:

(a) From subsection (c)(3) and (4) (Accounting for Disclosures) because release of the accounting of disclosures could alert the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS as well as the recipient agency. Disclosure of the accounting would therefore present a serious impediment to law enforcement efforts and/or efforts to preserve national security. Disclosure of the accounting would also permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension, which would undermine the entire investigative process.

(b) From subsection (d) (Access to Records) because access to the records contained in this system of records could inform the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation, to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS or another agency. Access to the records could permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension. Amendment of the records could interfere with ongoing investigations and law enforcement activities and would impose an impossible administrative burden by requiring investigations to be continuously reinvestigated. In addition, permitting access and amendment to such information could disclose security-sensitive information that could be detrimental to homeland security.

(c) From subsection (e)(1) (Relevancy and Necessity of Information) because in the course of investigations into potential violations of Federal law, the accuracy of information obtained or introduced occasionally may be unclear or the information may not be strictly relevant or necessary to a specific investigation. In the interests of effective law enforcement, it is appropriate to retain all information that may aid in establishing patterns of unlawful activity.

(d) From subsection (e)(2) (Collection of Information from Individuals) because requiring that information be collected from the subject of an investigation would alert the subject to the nature or existence of an investigation, thereby interfering with the related investigation and law enforcement activities.

(e) From subsection (e)(3) (Notice to Subjects) because providing such detailed information would impede law enforcement in that it could compromise investigations by: Revealing the existence of an otherwise confidential investigation and thereby provide an opportunity for the subject of an investigation to conceal evidence, alter patterns of behavior, or take other actions that could thwart investigative efforts; reveal the identity of witnesses in investigations, thereby providing an opportunity for the subjects of the investigations or others to harass, intimidate, or otherwise interfere with the collection of evidence or other information from such witnesses; or reveal the identity of confidential informants, which would negatively affect the informant's usefulness in any ongoing or future investigations and discourage members of the public from cooperating as confidential informants in any future investigations.

(f) From subsections (e)(4)(G), (H), and (I) (Agency Requirements), and (f) (Agency Rules) because portions of this system are exempt from the individual access provisions of subsection (d) for the reasons noted above, and therefore DHS is not required to establish requirements, rules, or procedures with respect to such access. Providing notice to individuals with respect to existence of records pertaining to them in the system of records or otherwise setting up procedures pursuant to which individuals may access and view records pertaining to themselves in the system would undermine investigative efforts and reveal the identities of witnesses, and potential witnesses, and confidential informants.

(g) From subsection (e)(5) (Collection of Information) because in the collection of information for law enforcement purposes it is impossible to determine in advance what information is accurate, relevant, timely, and complete. Compliance with (e)(5) would preclude DHS agents from using their investigative training and exercise of good judgment to both conduct and report on investigations.

(h) From subsection (e)(8) (Notice on Individuals) because compliance would interfere with DHS' ability to obtain, serve, and issue subpoenas, warrants, and other law enforcement mechanisms that may be filed under seal, and could result in disclosure of investigative techniques, procedures, and evidence.

(i) From subsection (g) to the extent that the system is exempt from other specific subsections of the Privacy Act relating to individuals' rights to access and amend their records contained in the system. Therefore DHS is not required to establish rules or procedures pursuant to which individuals may seek a civil remedy for the agency's: Refusal to amend a record; refusal to comply with a request for access to records; failure to maintain accurate, relevant timely and complete records; or failure to otherwise comply with an individual's right to access or amend records.

Dated: December 10, 2008.

**Hugo Teufel III,**

*Chief Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security.*

[FR Doc. E8-29881 Filed 12-18-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410-10-P

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Office of Security

#### 6 CFR Part 5

[Docket No. DHS-2008-0170]

### Privacy Act of 1974: Implementation of Exemptions; U.S. Customs and Border Protection—013 Seized Assets and Case Tracking System

**AGENCY:** Privacy Office, DHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is giving concurrent notice of a revised and updated system of records pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection—013 Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS) system of records and this proposed rulemaking. In this proposed rulemaking, the Department proposes to exempt portions of the system of records from one or more provisions of the Privacy Act because of criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement requirements.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before January 20, 2009.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments, identified by docket number DHS-2008-0170, by one of the following methods:

- *Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 1-866-466-5370.
- *Mail:* Hugo Teufel III, Chief Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

*Instructions:* All submissions received must include the agency name and docket number for this notice. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided.

*Docket:* For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general questions and privacy issues, please contact: Hugo Teufel III (703-235-0780), Chief Privacy Officer,

Privacy Office, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Background:* Pursuant to the savings clause in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107–296, Section 1512, 116 Stat. 2310 (November 25, 2002), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have relied on preexisting Privacy Act systems of records notices for the collection and maintenance of records pertaining to seizures and violators.

As part of its efforts to streamline and consolidate its record systems, DHS is establishing a component system of records under the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) for DHS/CBP that deals with seizures made, and persons found violating laws and regulations enforced, by DHS/CBP. This record system will allow DHS/CBP to collect and maintain records regarding or related to seizures and violators.

In this notice of proposed rulemaking, DHS now is proposing to exempt DHS/CBP—013 Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS), in part, from certain provisions of the Privacy Act.

The Privacy Act embodies fair information principles in a statutory framework governing the means by which the United States Government collects, maintains, uses, and disseminates personally identifiable information. The Privacy Act applies to information that is maintained in a “system of records.” A “system of records” is a group of any records under the control of an agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual. Individuals may request their own records that are maintained in a system of records in the possession or under the control of DHS by complying with DHS Privacy Act regulations, 6 CFR part 5.

The Privacy Act requires each agency to publish in the **Federal Register** a description of the type and character of each system of records that the agency maintains, and the routine uses that are contained in each system in order to make agency recordkeeping practices transparent, to notify individuals regarding the uses to which personally identifiable information is put, and to assist individuals in finding such files within the agency.

The Privacy Act allows Government agencies to exempt certain records from the access and amendment provisions. If an agency claims an exemption, however, it must issue a Notice of

Proposed Rulemaking to make clear to the public the reasons why a particular exemption is claimed.

DHS is claiming exemptions from certain requirements of the Privacy Act for the DHS/CBP—013 SEACATS. Some information in DHS/CBP—013 SEACATS relates to official DHS national security, law enforcement, customs, immigration and intelligence activities. These exemptions are needed to protect information relating to DHS activities from disclosure to subjects or others related to these activities. Specifically, the exemptions are required to preclude subjects of these activities from frustrating these processes; to avoid disclosure of activity techniques; to protect the identities and physical safety of confidential informants and law enforcement personnel; to ensure DHS’s ability to obtain information from third parties and other sources; and to protect the privacy of third parties. Disclosure of information to the subject of the inquiry could also permit the subject to avoid detection or apprehension.

The exemptions proposed here are standard law enforcement and national security exemptions exercised by a large number of Federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies. In appropriate circumstances, where compliance would not appear to interfere with or adversely affect the law enforcement purposes of this system and the overall law enforcement process, the applicable exemptions may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

A notice of system of records for Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS) is also published in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

**List of Subjects in 6 CFR Part 5**

Freedom of information; Privacy.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, DHS proposes to amend Chapter I of Title 6, Code of Federal Regulations, as follows:

**PART 5—DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS AND INFORMATION**

1. The authority citation for Part 5 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** Public Law 107–296, 116 Stat. 2135, 6 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; 5 U.S.C. 301. Subpart A also issued under 5 U.S.C. 552. Subpart B also issued under 5 U.S.C. 552a.

2. Add at the end of Appendix C to Part 5, Exemption of Record Systems under the Privacy Act, the following new paragraph “14”:

**Appendix C to Part 5—DHS Systems of Records Exempt From the Privacy Act**

\* \* \* \* \*

14. The Department of Homeland Security/United States Customs and Border Protection—013 Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS) system of records consists of electronic and paper records and will be used by DHS and its components. DHS/CBP—013 Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS) is a repository of information held by DHS in connection with its several and varied missions and functions, including, but not limited to: The enforcement of civil and criminal laws; investigations, inquiries, and proceedings thereunder; and national security and intelligence activities. Seized Assets and Case Tracking System (SEACATS) contains information that is collected by, on behalf of, in support of, or in cooperation with DHS and its components and may contain personally identifiable information collected by other Federal, State, local, tribal, foreign, or international government agencies. Pursuant to exemption 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2) of the Privacy Act, portions of this system are exempt from 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) and (4); (d); (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (e)(4)(I), (e)(5) and (e)(8); (f), and (g). Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2) of the Privacy Act, this system is exempt from the following provisions of the Privacy Act, subject to the limitations set forth in those subsections: 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (I), and (f). Exemptions from these particular subsections are justified, on a case-by-case basis to be determined at the time a request is made, for the following reasons:

(a) From subsection (c)(3) and (4) (Accounting for Disclosures) because release of the accounting of disclosures could alert the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS as well as the recipient agency. Disclosure of the accounting would therefore present a serious impediment to law enforcement efforts and/or efforts to preserve national security. Disclosure of the accounting would also permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension, which would undermine the entire investigative process.

(b) From subsection (d) (Access to Records) because access to the records contained in this system of records could inform the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation, to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS or another agency. Access to the records could permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension. Amendment of the records could interfere with ongoing investigations and law enforcement activities and would impose an impossible administrative burden by requiring investigations to be continuously reinvestigated. In addition, permitting access and amendment to such information could disclose security-sensitive information that could be detrimental to national security.

(c) From subsection (e)(1) (Relevancy and Necessity of Information) because in the course of investigations into potential violations of Federal law, the accuracy of information obtained or introduced occasionally may be unclear or the information may not be strictly relevant or necessary to a specific investigation. In the interests of effective law enforcement, it is appropriate to retain all information that may aid in establishing patterns of unlawful activity.

(d) From subsection (e)(2) (Collection of Information from Individuals) because requiring that information be collected from the subject of an investigation would alert the subject to the nature or existence of an investigation, thereby interfering with the related investigation and law enforcement activities.

(e) From subsection (e)(3) (Notice to Subjects) because providing such detailed information would impede law enforcement in that it could compromise investigations by: Revealing the existence of an otherwise confidential investigation and thereby provide an opportunity for the subject of an investigation to conceal evidence, alter patterns of behavior, or take other actions that could thwart investigative efforts; reveal the identity of witnesses in investigations, thereby providing an opportunity for the subjects of the investigations or others to harass, intimidate, or otherwise interfere with the collection of evidence or other information from such witnesses; or reveal the identity of confidential informants, which would negatively affect the informant's usefulness in any ongoing or future investigations and discourage members of the public from cooperating as confidential informants in any future investigations.

(f) From subsections (e)(4)(G), (H), and (I) (Agency Requirements), and (f) (Agency Rules) because portions of this system are exempt from the individual access provisions of subsection (d) for the reasons noted above, and therefore DHS is not required to establish requirements, rules, or procedures with respect to such access. Providing notice to individuals with respect to existence of records pertaining to them in the system of records or otherwise setting up procedures pursuant to which individuals may access and view records pertaining to themselves in the system would undermine investigative efforts and reveal the identities of witnesses, and potential witnesses, and confidential informants.

(g) From subsection (e)(5) (Collection of Information) because in the collection of information for law enforcement purposes it is impossible to determine in advance what information is accurate, relevant, timely, and complete. Compliance with (e)(5) would preclude DHS agents from using their investigative training and exercise of good judgment to both conduct and report on investigations.

(h) From subsection (e)(8) (Notice on Individuals) because compliance would interfere with DHS' ability to obtain, serve, and issue subpoenas, warrants, and other law enforcement mechanisms that may be filed under seal, and could result in disclosure of

investigative techniques, procedures, and evidence.

(i) From subsection (g) to the extent that the system is exempt from other specific subsections of the Privacy Act relating to individuals' rights to access and amend their records contained in the system. Therefore DHS is not required to establish rules or procedures pursuant to which individuals may seek a civil remedy for the agency's: Refusal to amend a record; refusal to comply with a request for access to records; failure to maintain accurate, relevant timely and complete records; or failure to otherwise comply with an individual's right to access or amend records.

Dated: December 10, 2008.

**Hugo Teufel III**,  
Chief Privacy Officer, Department of  
Homeland Security.

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Office of the Secretary

#### 6 CFR Part 5

[Docket No DHS-2008-0195]

### Privacy Act of 1974: Implementation of Exemptions; U.S. Customs and Border Protection—015 Automated Commercial System

**AGENCY:** Privacy Office, DHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Homeland Security is amending its regulations to exempt portions of a system of records from certain provisions of the Privacy Act. Specifically, the Department proposes to exempt portions of the CBP Automated Commercial System (ACS) from one or more provisions of the Privacy Act because of criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement requirements.

**DATES:** The public is invited to submit comments by January 20, 2009.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments, identified by docket number DHS-2008-0195 by one of the following methods:

- *Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 1-866-466-5370.
- *Mail:* Hugo Teufel III, Chief Privacy Officer, Privacy Office, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general questions please contact: Laurence E. Castelli (202-325-0280), Chief, Privacy Act Policy and

Procedures Branch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Regulations and Rulings, Office of International Trade, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20229. For privacy issues please contact: Hugo Teufel III (703-235-0780), Chief Privacy Officer, Privacy Office, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), elsewhere in this edition of the **Federal Register**, published a Privacy Act system of records notice describing records in the Automated Commercial System (ACS).

To help prevent terrorist weapons from being transported to the United States, vessel carriers bringing cargo to the United States are required to transmit certain information to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) about the cargo they are transporting prior to lading that cargo at foreign ports of entry. CBP is issuing an interim final rule that requires both importers and carriers to submit additional information pertaining to cargo to CBP before the cargo is brought into the United States by vessel. This information must be submitted to CBP by way of a CBP-approved electronic data interchange system. The required information is necessary to improve CBP's ability to identify high-risk shipments so as to prevent smuggling and ensure cargo safety and security, as required by section 203 of the Security and Accountability for Every (SAFE) Port Act of 2006 and section 343(a) of the Trade Act of 2002, as amended by the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

The proposed rule was known to the trade as both the "Importer Security Filing proposal" and the "10 + 2 proposal." The name "10 + 2" is shorthand for the number of advance data elements CBP was proposing to collect. Carriers would be generally required to submit two additional data elements—a vessel stow plan and container status messages regarding certain events relating to containers loaded on vessels destined to the United States—to the elements they are already required to electronically transmit in advance (the "2" of "10 + 2"); and importers, as defined in the proposed regulations, would be required to submit ten data elements—an Importer Security Filing containing ten data elements (the "10" of "10 + 2").

The Automated Commercial System (ACS) is the comprehensive system used