

United States duty-free. The President denied a petition for a CNL waiver for stearic acid (HTS 3823.11.00) from Indonesia. Therefore, the product is subject to the NTR duty rate.

As described in List V, the President granted one-year *de minimis* waivers to 27 products that exceeded the 50-percent import-share CNL but for which the aggregate value of all U.S. imports of that article was below the 2018 *de minimis* level of \$24 million. Qualifying products will continue to enter the United States duty-free.

Erland Herfindahl,

Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for the Generalized System of Preferences, Office of the United States Trade Representative.

[FR Doc. 2019–25095 Filed 11–19–19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[Docket No. 2019–0640]

Agency Information Collection Activities: Requests for Comments; Clearance of Renewed Approval of Information Collection: Air Taxi and Commercial Operator Airport Activity Survey

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, FAA invites public comments about our intention to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval to renew an information collection. The collection involves requesting that small on-demand operators voluntarily provide the number of revenue passengers that boarded their aircraft at each airport annually. This information is used in determining an airport's category and eligibility for federal funding on an annual basis. It is not available through any other federal data source. The 60-day FRN was published on August 16, 2019.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by December 20, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments:

By electronic docket:
www.regulations.gov (2019–0640).

By mail: Luis Loarte, FAA, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591.

By fax: 202–267–5257.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Luis Loarte by email at: Luis.Loarte@faa.gov; phone: 202–267–9622.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Comments Invited: You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for FAA's performance; (b) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (c) ways for FAA to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collection; and (d) ways that the burden could be minimized without reducing the quality of the collected information. The agency will summarize and/or include your comments in the request for OMB's clearance of this information collection.

OMB Control Number: 2120–0067.

Title: Air Taxi and Commercial Operator Airport Activity Survey.

Form Numbers: FAA Form 1800–31.

Type of Review: Clearance of a renewal of an information collection.

Background: The data collected through this survey is the only source of data for charter and nonscheduled passenger data by Part 135 operator (air taxis). The data received on the form (either paper or signed electronic copy) is then incorporated into the Air Carrier Activity Information System which is used to determine whether an airport is eligible for Airport Improvement Program funds and for calculating primary airport sponsor apportionment as specified by title 49 United States Code (U.S.C.), section 47114. The data collected on the form includes passenger enplanements by carrier and by airport. Passengers traveling on air taxis would be overlooked entirely if this passenger survey were not conducted. As a result, many airports would not receive their fair share of funds since there is currently no other source for this type of charter activity. On average, approximately 100 operators respond each year, reporting a total 1.1 million passengers. This data is important to those airports that struggle to meet the 2,500 and 10,000 passenger levels and could not do so without the reporting of the charter passengers. The 60-day FRN was published on August 16, 2019 under FRN document citation number 2019–0640.

Respondents: The voluntary survey is sent through the U.S. Postal Service to approximately 190 small on-demand operators (certificated under Federal Aviation Regulation Part 135) that have reported activity in the last three years. The form is also available on the FAA website. Beginning with the calendar year 2019 data, operators will be able to

access the form, electronically sign and submit it to the FAA.

Frequency: Annually.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: 1.5 hours per respondent.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: On average, approximately 100 respondents submit an annual response. The cumulative total annual burden is estimated to be 150 hours.

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 14, 2019.

Luis Loarte,

Senior Airport Planner, Office of Airports/Airport Planning and Environmental Division.

[FR Doc. 2019–25087 Filed 11–19–19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA–2016–0086]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

Under part 211 of title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), this document provides the public notice that on October 3, 2019, CSX Transportation (CSX) petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for a waiver of compliance from certain provisions of the Federal railroad safety regulations contained at 49 CFR part 232, *Brake System Safety Standards for Freight and Other Non-Passenger Trains and Equipment*, and 49 CFR part 229, *Railroad Locomotive Safety Standards*. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA–2016–0086.

Specifically, CSX seeks relief with respect to the application of 49 CFR 232.205(c)(1)(iii), *Leakage test*, and § 229.29(b), *Air brake system calibration, maintenance, and testing*, for the calibration of locomotive air flow method (AFM) indicators. CSX requests to become a full test member of the existing FRA–2016–0086 test waiver (joining BNSF Railway), under the same conditions as BNSF, for testing 1,264 of CSX's New York Air Brake (NYAB) CCB II equipped locomotives (*see* FRA–2016–0086–0006) to investigate whether the interval for calibration may be safely extended to 184 days. CSX also requests to form a test team operating under the current FRA–2016–0086 test committee to test all 440 CSX Wabtec Fastbrake-equipped locomotives. CSX has been an active member of the FRA–2016–0086 test committee since its inception and is familiar with the work performed to date by this committee. On August 29, 2019, the test committee extended a consensus recommendation for CSX to join the waiver as a testing member to

help assess Wabtec's Fastbrake systems, and to expand the scope of NYAB CCB II locomotives being evaluated under the waiver.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at www.regulations.gov and in person at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Docket Operations Facility, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Operations Facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested parties desire an opportunity for oral comment and a public hearing, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **Website:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- **Fax:** 202-493-2251.
- **Mail:** Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.
- **Hand Delivery:** 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Communications received by December 20, 2019 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered if practicable. Anyone can search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the document, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). Under 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its processes. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-

14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>. See also <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice> for the privacy notice of [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Issued in Washington, DC.

John Karl Alexy,

*Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety,
Chief Safety Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2019-25138 Filed 11-19-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Summary of a Precedent Opinion of the General Counsel

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is publishing a summary of a legal interpretation issued by the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) involving crediting certain veterans for their payment of the statutory funding fee. This interpretation is considered precedential by VA and will be followed by VA officials and employees in matters involving the same legal issues. This summary is published to provide the public with notice of VA's interpretations regarding the legal matters at issue.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Suzanne Hill, Law Librarian, Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the General Counsel, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461-7624.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A VA regulation at 38 Code of Federal Regulation 2.6(e)(8) delegates to the VA General Counsel, the power to designate an opinion as precedential, and 38 CFR 14.507(b) specifies that precedential opinions are binding on VA officials and employees in subsequent matters involving the legal issue decided in the precedent opinion. The interpretation of the General Counsel on legal matters contained in such opinions is conclusive as to all VA officials and employees not only in the matter at issue but also in subsequent matters unless there has been a material change in a controlling statute or regulation or a superseding written legal opinion of the General Counsel or a judicial decision. 38 CFR 14.507(b). VA publishes summaries of such opinions in order to provide the public with notice of those interpretations of the

General Counsel that must be followed in future matters. The full text of such opinions, with personal identifiers deleted, may be obtained by contacting the VA official named above or by accessing the opinions on the internet at: http://www.va.gov/ogc/precedent_opinions.asp.

VAOPGCPREC 2-2019

Questions Presented

1. Does VA have legal authority to issue a refund of a funding fee collected under 38 United States Code 3729 when the requirements for waiver of the fee under section 3729(c) are met?

2. If yes, to whom and under what circumstances?

3. Is a refund determination subject to the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA)?

Held

1. Yes. If VA determines that veterans impermissibly incurred funding fees due to overt error, systems limitations, or process limitations, VA should promptly credit such veterans for the fees they incurred. Additionally, VA must refund a funding fee if a later-in-time award of disability compensation is effective as of a date that is on or before the date the funding fee was collected.

2. We believe a claim for remittance of a funding fee that was improperly assessed or that may now be refunded due to an intervening retroactive award of service-connected benefits is similar to the types of claims that the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has found not to be claims for benefits. Since a claim for a refund is not a claim for benefits, VA should promulgate rules clarifying VA's policy and procedures for processing claims for refunds. VA should continue to issue refunds whenever VA determines on its own, or if a veteran provides documentation, that a refund is due.

3. The three-lane review scheme of the AMA applies to claims for "benefits"; VA is not required to make all three AMA review options available with respect to determinations not involving benefit claims. VA could choose to make higher-level review processes for supplemental claims or make similar processes available for decisions concerning requests for refund of the funding fee.

Effective Date: June 25, 2019.

Richard J. Hipolit,

Principal Deputy General Counsel