

State, local, or tribal governments, or to the private sector, result from this action. The EPA has also determined that this action does not include a mandate that may result in estimated costs of \$100 million or more to State, local, or tribal governments in the aggregate or to the private sector. Approval of Wisconsin's emissions inventories does not impose any new requirements or have a significant economic impact on small entities.

Under section 307(b)(1) of the Clean Air Act, petitions for judicial review of this action must be filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the appropriate circuit by July 7, 1997.

Filing a petition for reconsideration by the Administrator of this final rule does not affect the finality of this rule for the purposes of judicial review nor does it extend the time within which a petition for judicial review may be filed, and shall not postpone the effectiveness of such rule or action. This action may not be challenged later in proceedings to enforce its requirements (See Section 307(b)(2)).

#### List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Ozone, Volatile organic compounds, Nitrogen oxides.

**Authority:** 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671(q).

Dated: April 16, 1997.

**David A. Ullrich,**

*Acting Regional Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 97-11628 Filed 5-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

## GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

### 41 CFR Part 101-47

RIN 3090-AG39

#### Utilization and Disposal of Real Property

**AGENCY:** Office Of Governmentwide Policy, GSA.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** This proposed rule amends the section of the regulations issued by the General Services Administration (GSA) pertaining to the responsibilities of disposal agencies with respect to appraisals. This action is necessary because it clarifies and strengthens the intended effect of this rule which is to ensure the reliability, integrity, and confidentiality of appraisals of real property.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before July 7, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to the Office of Property Disposal (PR), General Services Administration, Washington, DC 20405

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Norman Miller, Director, Redeployment Services Division (202) 501-0067.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. GSA has determined that this is not a significant rule for the purposes of Executive Order 12866 of September 30, 1993, because it is not likely to result in any of the impacts noted in Executive Order 12866, affect the rights of specified individuals, or raise issues arising from the policies of the Administration. GSA has based all administrative decisions underlying this rule on adequate information concerning the need for and consequences of the rule; has determined that the potential benefits to society from this rule outweigh the potential costs; has maximized the net benefits; and has chosen the alternative approach involving the least net cost to society. This is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

### B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

This proposed rule is not required to be published in the **Federal Register** for public comment, therefore the Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply.

### C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply because the proposed revisions do not impose recordkeeping or information collection requirements, or the collection of information from offerors, contractors, or members of the public which require the approval of OMB under 44 U.S.C. 501 *et seq.*

#### List of Subjects in 41 CFR Part 101-47

Government property management; Surplus Government property.

Therefore, it is proposed that 41 CFR part 47 be amended as set forth below:

### PART 101-47—UTILIZATION AND DISPOSAL OF REAL PROPERTY

1. The authority citation for 41 CFR Part 47 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 40 U.S.C. 486(c).

2. Section 101-47.303-4 is amended by revising paragraph (c) and adding paragraph (d) to read as follows:

#### § 101-47.303-4 Appraisal.

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) The disposal agency shall have the property appraised by experienced and qualified persons familiar with the types of property to be appraised by them. If

the property is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, the appraisal should consider the effect of historic covenants on fair market value. Any person engaged to collect or evaluate information pursuant to this subsection shall certify that there is no interest, direct or indirect, of said person, in the property which would conflict in any manner with the preparation and submission of an impartial appraisal report.

#### (d) *Appraisal confidentiality.*

Appraisals, appraisal reports, appraisal analyses, and other pre-decisional documents obtained in accordance with subpart 101-47.3 are confidential and for the use of authorized personnel of Government agencies having a need for such information. Further, such information shall not be divulged prior to the delivery and acceptance of the deed.

Dated: February 3, 1997.

**David J. Barram,**

*Acting Administrator of General Services.*

[FR Doc. 97-11538 Filed 5-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-23-P

## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

### 47 CFR Part 2

[ET Docket No. 97-94; FCC 97-84]

#### Streamline the Equipment Authorization Process

**AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** By this Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) the Commission proposes to amend the rules to simplify our existing equipment authorization processes; deregulate the equipment authorization requirements for certain types of equipment; and provide for electronic filing of applications for equipment authorization. These actions will greatly reduce the complexity and burden of the Commission's equipment authorization requirements.

**DATES:** Comments must be filed on or before July 21, 1997, and reply comments August 18, 1997. Persons wishing to comment on the information collections should submit comments July 21, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and reply comments should be sent to the Office of Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C. 20554. In addition to filing comments with the Secretary, a copy of any comments on the information collections contained

herein should be submitted to Dorothy Conway, Federal Communications Commission, Room 234, 1919 M Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20554, or via the Internet to dconway@fcc.gov.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Julius P. Knapp at (301) 725-1585 x 201 or John Reed at (202) 418-2455.

Internet: jknapp@fcc.gov or jreed@fcc.gov, Office of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission. For additional information concerning the information collections, or copies of the information collections contained in this *NPRM* contact Dorothy Conway at (202) 418-0217, or via the Internet at dconway@fcc.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This is a summary of the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rule Making, ET Docket 97-94, FCC 97-84, adopted March 13, 1997, and released March 27, 1996. The item proposes to: simplify our existing equipment authorization processes; deregulate the equipment authorization requirements for certain types of equipment and provide for electronic filing of applications for equipment authorization.

This Notice contains proposed or modified information collections subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), Public Law 104-13. The general public, and other Federal agencies are invited to comment on the proposed or modified information collections contained in this proceeding.

The full text of this Commission decision, including the proposed rules appendix, is available for inspection and copying during normal business hours in the FCC Reference Center (Room 239), 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and also may be purchased from the Commission's duplication contractor, International Transcription Service, (202) 857-3800, 2100 M Street, N.W., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20037.

**Summary of NPRM**

1. By this action, the Commission proposes to amend the rules to: simplify our existing equipment authorization processes; deregulate the equipment authorization requirements for certain types of equipment; and provide for electronic filing of applications for equipment authorization. These actions will greatly reduce the complexity and burden of the Commission's equipment authorization requirements. Further, these steps will improve the efficiency of the equipment authorization process so that products can be introduced to the market more rapidly.

2. The Commission's equipment authorization program has been a

resounding success in controlling interference. Today, hundreds of millions of radio transmitters, consumer products and electronic devices all share the airwaves with remarkably little interference. At the same time, we note that the current equipment authorization procedures have evolved over the course of more than 25 years. We observe that the current multiplicity of equipment authorization processes has resulted in an extensive and complicated set of regulations. Manufacturers are often confused as to the requirements and procedures they must follow, which can sometimes lead to delays in introducing products to the market. Accordingly, we are initiating this proceeding on our own motion to provide a simpler, less burdensome path for products to be marketed in the United States. We recognize that many parties have an interest in these rules. We intend to solicit as broad a range of comments and alternative suggestions as possible. Our specific proposals are discussed below.

3. The FCC rules specify technical requirements for radio and electronic equipment to control radio frequency interference. In order to ensure compliance with the technical requirements, the rules generally require the equipment to be authorized in accordance with one of the procedures in Part 2 Subpart J of the rules. The procedures are: type acceptance, certification, notification, verification and declaration of conformity. The type acceptance and certification procedures are similar in many respects. Accordingly, we are proposing to eliminate the type acceptance procedure and incorporate into the certification procedure those requirements that continue to be necessary for equipment used in the authorized services. We believe it is appropriate to maintain use of the term certification because this term is used internationally for similar procedures. We recognize that there are several similar rule sections under the type acceptance and certification procedures, such as the requirements for information that must be included in an application and for permissive changes. We propose generally to supplement the existing certification rules with any additional information that may continue to be needed for equipment used in the authorized radio services. We invite comments on these proposals.

4. The notification procedure was initially established in the 1980s for equipment that no longer warranted type acceptance or certification, but still posed sufficient risk of noncompliance to monitor the introduction of new products. We have found little benefit

from the notification procedure. Accordingly, we are proposing to delete the notification procedure. We are generally proposing that equipment formerly subject to notification would instead be subject to either the DoC or verification procedure, with our specific proposals given below. We invite comment on the continued need for the notification procedure.

5. We observe that the verification and DoC procedures are also similar in that they are both manufacturer self-authorization procedures. However, there are several important differences. We are proposing to maintain the DoC and verification procedures. The DoC procedure was established only recently and any further changes at this time would be disruptive. Further, we note that the verification procedure provides a means to authorize equipment that imposes very little burden on manufacturers. We believe such a procedure is appropriate for equipment that has an excellent record of compliance, where the measurement methods are well known and understood, and it is relatively easy to determine the party responsible for compliance. Nevertheless, we invite comment as to whether we should maintain DoC and verification as separate procedures or whether there may be some benefit in combining these procedures in some fashion.

6. We recognize that these proposed changes raise a number of additional issues. We are therefore proposing to discontinue maintenance of the Radio Equipment List. We are proposing that under the new combined certification procedure the fee will be \$895 for devices operating under Parts 15 and 18 of the rules and \$450 for everything else. Both charges will be applied for products that contain devices that require certification under either Part 15 or 18 and other rule parts, excluding telephone equipment registration under Part 68 for equipment that is widely available on the market we are proposing to require submittal of a sample to the Commission for testing within 14 days of request. To accomplish this, we are proposing to require manufacturers to provide a voucher upon request for purchase of a sample equipment at a retail outlet. We would also like to take this opportunity to clarify the rules that apply to corporate mergers, buyouts, acquisitions, etc. involving grantees of equipment authorization. Section 2.929 of the rules states that an equipment authorization issued by the Commission may not be assigned, exchanged, or in any other way transferred to a second party. Section 2.935 states that in the

case of a transfer of control of the grantee of an equipment authorization, as in the case of sale or merger of the grantee, notice of such transfer must be received by the Commission not later than 60 days subsequent to the consummation of the agreement effecting the transfer of control. We are proposing to combine these rules into one and clarify that the party assuming responsibility for the equipment may file a single application covering all the affected equipment. Comments are invited on each of these proposals.

7. We have not reviewed the requirements for many types of equipment for 10 years or longer. We believe that submittal and review of equipment authorization applications to the Commission is no longer warranted for certain equipment where the technical requirements are met with little difficulty, the test methods are widely understood, interpretive questions arise infrequently, and there has been an excellent record of compliance. Accordingly, we are proposing to relax the equipment authorization requirements for various types of equipment based on our experience in reviewing applications and our assessment of the appropriate procedure required to ensure continued compliance. Our specific proposals are as follows:

a. Relax the requirements from certification or notification to the DoC procedure for the following Part 15 unintentional radiators: CB receivers; superregenerative receivers; all other Part 15 receivers; and, TV Interface Devices (including video cassette recorders and TV video games), except that we will require certification for cable system terminal devices to ensure against marketing of such devices for theft of cable service. We will continue to require certification for scanning receivers to ensure that they meet the Congressionally mandated requirement of Section 15.121 that they do not tune frequencies allocated to the Domestic Public Cellular Radio Telecommunications Service.

b. Relax the requirements for Part 18 consumer ISM (industrial, scientific and medical) equipment from certification to the DoC procedure. This includes such devices as consumer microwave ovens, RF lighting devices, and ultrasonic jewelry cleaners.

c. Relax the requirements for wildlife tracking and ocean buoys operating under Part 5 from notification to verification.

d. Relax the requirements for Part 101 point-to-point microwave transmitters from notification to the DoC procedure.

e. Relax the requirements for Part 73 standard broadcast (AM transmitters), FM transmitters, television transmitters, and antenna phase monitors from notification to verification.

f. Relax the requirements for Auxiliary Broadcast aural STLs, aural intercity relays, aural STL boosters, aural intercity relay boosters, TV STLs, TV intercity relays, TV translator relays and TV microwave boosters from notification to the DoC procedure.

g. Relax the requirements for Part 78 Cable Television Relay fixed transmitters from notification to the DoC procedure.

h. Relax the requirement for Part 80 INMARSAT equipment from notification to verification.

i. Relax the requirement for Part 87 406 Mhz emergency locator transmitters from notification to verification.

j. No changes for equipment that is currently subject to either the DoC or verification procedures. Specifically, the following equipment would remain subject to verification: digital devices (other than personal computer equipment); FM and TV broadcast receivers; non-consumer ISM equipment; and stand-alone cable input selector switches. Personal computer equipment can continue to be authorized under the DoC procedure.

8. We propose to retain the certification requirements for Part 15 intentional radiators, including spread spectrum devices, cordless telephones, remote control and security devices, field disturbance sensors, unlicensed PCS (Personal Communications Service) devices and NII (National Information Infrastructure) devices. We are proposing to shift all equipment currently subject to type acceptance to the certification procedure. This is simply an administrative change and will not lower the threshold of review for compliance with the technical requirements. We invite comments on our specific proposals for changing the equipment authorization requirements for various equipment. In particular, we solicit information as to whether any equipment currently subject to certification or notification should be relaxed to a different procedure than we have proposed. We also invite recommendations as to whether any equipment proposed to be subject to certification should be relaxed to the DoC or verification procedures. We will permit applicants to file under the existing procedures for a period of up to two years. We will also discontinue accepting applications for certification of personal computer equipment at that time since such equipment can be authorized under the DoC procedure.

We solicit comments on this proposed transition plan.

9. We are committed to continually improving the processing of applications for equipment authorization that are required to be submitted to the Commission. We believe the existing process can be streamlined significantly by providing for the electronic filing of such applications. At this time we do not know precisely when we will initiate electronic filing of applications for certification. The Commission will issue a public notice announcing the acceptance of electronically filed applications at the appropriate time. We are in this notice proposing to recognize electronic signatures on applications. There are also a number of other issues that we believe should be examined before implementing electronic filing of applications.

10. It appears that the most effective means to implement electronic filing would be through the use of the Internet. Initial system design proposes that an application would be completed via an Internet web page located on an FCC Internet server. Attachments, including all exhibits required by the Commission's rules such as manuals, diagrams, photographs, etc., would be copied to a specified FCC file server using file transfer protocol (ftp). Exhibits would follow a standard submission format, and be submitted using tagged image format (tif) files and/or portable document format (pdf) files. Fees would be paid either by check or by credit card. We request comments on this general approach.

11. We are considering whether to require that *all* equipment authorization applications be filed electronically. While we recognize that not all applicants would have on-site access to equipment that would permit electronic filing, we believe that a majority of equipment authorization applicants are on the "cutting edge" of technology, and would have ready access to equipment and software to permit them to file electronically. We invite comment on the possible complete elimination of paper applications.

12. The Commission frequently receives requests to examine and copy applications for equipment authorization after they have been granted. If implemented, the proposed electronic filing initiative would result in digitized storage of all equipment authorization application information. We are considering how we can best make the applications available to the public once they are granted. While all application information could be made available via the Internet, we are

concerned that the volume of information contained in each application could cause an overall degradation of service to users. An alternative would be to provide via the Internet the information that users consider most useful, such as the application Form 731, and designate an outside contractor that could provide the remaining information upon request. Specific comments are requested on this approach and whether certain other basic information such as the measurement report should be made available over the Internet. We also solicit views on the vehicle and media that is most beneficial for distributing application information.

### Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

13. As required by Section 603 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act,<sup>1</sup> the Commission has prepared an Initial Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) of the expected significant economic impact on small entities by the policies and rules proposed in this Notice of Proposed Rule Making ("NPRM"). Written public comments are requested on the IRFA. These comments must be filed in accordance with the same filing deadlines as comments on the rest of the NPRM but they must have a separate and distinct heading designating them as responses to the IRFA. The Secretary shall send a copy of this NPRM, including the IRFA, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration in accordance with paragraph 603(a) of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

14. Need For and Objectives of the Proposed Rule. This rule making proceeding is initiated to obtain comment regarding proposals to improve the Federal Communications Commission equipment authorization program for telecommunications equipment and electronics products. The Commission seeks to simplify and streamline the equipment authorization process for telecommunications equipment and electronics products; deregulate the equipment authorization requirements for certain equipment; and implement electronic filing of applications.

15. Legal Basis. The proposed action is authorized under Sections 4(i), 301, 302, 303(e), 303(f), 303(r), 304 and 307 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. Sections 154(i), 301, 302, 303(e), 303(f), 303(r), 304 and 307.

16. Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rule Will Apply. For the purposes of this NPRM, the RFA defines

a "small business" to be the same as a "small business concern" under the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. § 632, unless the Commission has developed one or more definitions that are appropriate to its activities.<sup>2</sup> Under the Small Business Act, a "small business concern" is one that: (1) is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation; and (3) meets any additional criteria established by the Small Business Administration (SBA).<sup>3</sup>

17. The Commission has not developed a definition of small entities applicable to RF equipment manufacturers. Therefore, we will utilize the SBA definition applicable to manufacturers of Radio and Television Broadcasting and Communications Equipment. According to the SBA's regulations, an RF equipment manufacturer must have 750 or fewer employees in order to qualify as a small business concern.<sup>4</sup> Census Bureau data indicates that there are 858 U.S. companies that manufacture radio and television broadcasting and communications equipment, and that 778 of these firms have fewer than 750 employees and would be classified as small entities.<sup>5</sup> The Census Bureau category is very broad, and specific figures are not available as to how many of these firms are manufacturers of RF devices. However, we believe that many of the companies that manufacture the RF devices that will be affected by this rulemaking may qualify as small entities. We seek comments to this IRFA regarding the number of small entities to which the proposed rule pertains.

18. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping and Other Compliance Requirements. We are proposing to eliminate the equipment authorization process called notification which requires filing of information with the Commission. We are also proposing to eliminate type acceptance as a separate procedure and instead incorporate the essential requirements into our certification procedure. A number of types of equipment that are currently subject to an equipment authorization by the Commission will be permitted to be self-authorized by the manufacturer. We also plan to implement electronic filing for applications for equipment authorization that will be filed with the

Commission. We expect that these actions will result in a significant decrease in the overall recordkeeping requirements.

19. Significant Alternatives to Proposed Rule Which Minimize Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities and Accomplish Stated Objectives. The actions proposed in this proceeding will result in a significant decrease in equipment authorization applications that must be filed with the Federal Communications Commission. We believe that small entities will benefit from these proposals because in many cases they will no longer be required to file applications with the Commission. Also, small entities will benefit from the simpler regulations and streamlined process for equipment that continues to require authorization by the FCC. We seek comments to this IRFA regarding these tentative conclusions.

20. Federal Rules Which Overlap, Duplicate or Conflict With These Rules. None.

### Paperwork Reduction Act Information

21. This NPRM contains modified information collections subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The Federal Communications Commission, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the following information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number. No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) that does not display a valid control number. Comments are requested concerning (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's burden estimate; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. The following is supplementary information regarding the modified information collections contained in this NPRM:

OMB Approval Number: 3060-0057.

Title: Application for Equipment Authorization, Section 2.911.

<sup>2</sup> See 5 U.S.C. § 601(3) (incorporating by reference the definition of "small business concern" in 5 U.S.C. § 632).

<sup>3</sup> 15 U.S.C. § 632.

<sup>4</sup> 13 CFR § 121.201, (SIC) Code 3663.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1992 *Census of Transportation, Communications and Utilities* (issued May 1995), SIC category 3663.

<sup>1</sup> 5 U.S.C. § 603.

*Form No.:* FCC Form 731.

*Type of Review:* Revision of existing collection.

*Respondents:* Businesses or other for-profit; Small businesses or organizations.

*Number of Respondents:* 3,000.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* 24 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 72,000 hours.

*Needs and Uses:* Equipment testing is performed, and data is gathered, to provide information to aid in controlling interference to radio communications. A completed application combined with descriptive information, test data, and occasionally a test sample documents the compliance of the subject equipment with the FCC Rules, and may also be used to aid in enforcement of the Rules. This NPRM proposes a streamlining of the equipment authorization process to provide for approval of certain equipment under the less burdensome Declaration of Conformity process. The number of respondents and corresponding burden hours are therefore expected to be reduced as a result of this NPRM.

*OMB Approval Number:* 3060-0636.

*Title:* Equipment Authorization—Declaration of Conformity, Parts 2 and 15.

*Form No.:* None.

*Type of Review:* Revision of existing collection.

*Respondents:* Businesses or other for-profit; Small businesses or organizations.

*Number of Respondents:* 6,600.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* 19 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 125,400 hours.

*Needs and Uses:* Data collected is used to investigate complaints of harmful interference to radio communications, and to verify manufacturer's or supplier's compliance with the Rules. The information collected is essential to controlling potential interference to radio communications. This NPRM proposes a streamlining of the equipment authorization process to provide for approval of certain equipment under the less burdensome Declaration of Conformity process. An increase in the number of respondents and burden hours for this collection is proposed, concurrent with a decrease in the respondents and burden hours reported under OMB 3060-0057. A net decrease in burden hours is anticipated as a result of the NPRM.

## List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 2

Authorization, Communications equipment, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Federal Communications Commission.

**William F. Caton,**

*Acting Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 97-10717 Filed 5-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

#### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Extension of Comment Period and Notice of Public Hearings on Proposed Endangered Status for the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*)

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; notice of public hearings and extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides notice that public hearings will be held on the proposed determination of endangered status for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*). To accommodate the public hearings, the comment period on the proposal will be extended. The Preble's meadow jumping mouse, a small rodent of the family Zapodidae, is known to occur only in four counties in Colorado and two counties in Wyoming. All interested parties are invited to submit comments on this proposal.

**DATES:** Public hearings will be held as follows: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 1997, in Cheyenne, Wyoming; 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 1997, in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 1997, in Denver, Colorado. Registration will begin one hour prior to each hearing. Comments will be accepted until July 28, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The public hearings will be held at the following locations: the Laramie County Library, 2800 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, Wyoming; the 3rd Floor Hearing Room, El Paso County Office Building, 27 East Vermijo, Colorado Springs, Colorado; and, the Hunter Education Classroom, Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, Colorado. Written comments and materials should be sent to the Colorado Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486,

Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225. Comments and materials received will be available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Colorado Field Office, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 361, Lakewood, Colorado.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** LeRoy W. Carlson, Colorado Field Supervisor, telephone 303/275-2370 (see ADDRESSES section).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The Preble's meadow jumping mouse, a small rodent in the family Zapodidae, is known to occur in only four counties in Colorado and two counties in Wyoming. Historical surveys document its former presence in five additional counties in Colorado and three additional counties in Wyoming. The Preble's meadow jumping mouse lives primarily in heavily vegetated riparian habitats. Habitat loss and degradation caused by agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial development imperil its continued existence. This proposal, if made final, would extend protection of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) to the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

On March 25, 1997, the Service published a proposed rule (62 FR 14093) to list the Preble's meadow jumping mouse as an endangered species without critical habitat.

##### Public Comments Solicited

The Service has scheduled hearings on May 19, 21, and 22, 1997, with registration beginning 1 hour prior to each hearing (see DATES and ADDRESSES above). Anyone wishing to make an oral statement for the record is encouraged to provide a written copy of their statement to be presented to the Service at the start of the hearing. In the event that there is a large audience, the time allotted for oral statements may have to be limited.

Oral and written statements concerning the proposed rule will receive equal consideration by the Service. There are no limits to the length of written comments presented at the hearing or mailed to the Service. Comments particularly are sought concerning:

(1) Biological, commercial trade, or other relevant data concerning any threat (or lack thereof) to the Preble's meadow jumping mouse;

(2) The location of any additional populations of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse;