

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 10314]

Meeting of the United States-Bahrain Joint Forum on Environmental Cooperation and Request for Comments on the Meeting Agenda and the 2017–2021 Work Program**AGENCY:** Department of State.**ACTION:** Announcement of meeting; solicitation of comments; invitation to public session.

SUMMARY: The Department of State is providing notice that the governments of the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain (the governments) intend to hold a Joint Forum on Environmental Cooperation (Joint Forum) and a public session in Manama, Bahrain, on March 7, 2018, pursuant to paragraphs 2–5 of the Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation between the Governments of the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain, which was signed September 14, 2004. During the Joint Forum, the governments will discuss how the United States and Bahrain can cooperate to protect the environment, review past bilateral environmental cooperation, and identify priority projects pursuant to the 2017–2021 Work Program on Environmental Cooperation (Work Program), approved in August 2017. The Department of State invites members of the public to submit written comments on items to include on the meeting agenda or in the 2017–2021 Work Program.

The Department of State also invites interested persons to attend a public session to learn more about the work of the Joint Forum and the new Work Program, and to provide advice or comments on its implementation.

DATES: The public session will be held on March 7, 2018. Information about the venue and time is available from the contact below. Comments on the Joint Forum meeting agenda and/or the 2017–2021 Work Program should be provided no later than March 1, 2018, to facilitate consideration.

ADDRESSES: Persons interested in attending the public session or in submitting comments and suggestions should contact Marko Velikonja, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues, U.S. Department of State, by electronic mail at Velikonjam@state.gov or fax at (202) 647–5947 with the subject line “United States-Bahrain Joint Forum.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marko Velikonja, Telephone (202) 647–4828 or email at Velikonjam@state.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In preparing comments, submitters are encouraged to refer to:

- 2017–2021 Plan of Action, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/273263.pdf>.
- Other useful documents are available at: <https://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/bahrain/>.

Robert Wing,

Acting Director, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2018–03593 Filed 2–21–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–09–P**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

[Public Notice 10315]

Notice of Public Meeting of the International Telecommunication Advisory Committee and Preparations for Upcoming International Telecommunications Meetings

This notice announces a meeting of the Department of State’s International Telecommunication Advisory Committee (ITAC). The ITAC will meet on March 9, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. EST at 1101 K Street (NW), Suite 610 to review the results of recent multilateral meetings, update on preparations for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference (PP–18), and discuss preparations for upcoming other multilateral meetings at the ITU. The meeting will focus on the following topics:

1. ITU Council Working Groups
 - a. Experts group on International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs)
 - b. Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans
 - c. Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources
 - d. Council Working Group on Implementation of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Outcomes
 - e. Council Working Group on International Internet-Related Public Policy Issues
2. Preparations for the ITU 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference (PP–18)
3. ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU–R) meetings
4. ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU–T) meetings
5. Internet Governance Forum (IGF)
6. Regional PP–18 Preparatory Groups
7. WSIS Forum

PP–18 will take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from October 29 to November 17, 2018. The

Plenipotentiary Conference, which takes place every four years, is the highest policy-making body of the ITU. PP–18 will determine the overall policy direction of the ITU; adopt the strategic and financial plans for the next four years; elect the 48 members of Council, 12 members of the Radio Regulations Board, and five senior ITU elected officials; and consider and adopt, if appropriate, amendments to the ITU Constitution and Convention.

Attendance at this meeting is open to the public as seating capacity allows. The public will have an opportunity to provide comments at this meeting at the invitation of the chair. Further details on this ITAC meeting will be announced on the Department of State’s email list, ITAC@lmlist.state.gov. Use of the ITAC list is limited to meeting announcements and confirmations, distribution of agendas and other relevant meeting documents. The Department welcomes any U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident to remain on or join the ITAC listserv by registering by email via ITAC@state.gov and providing his or her name, email address, telephone contact and the company, organization, or community that he or she is representing, if any. Persons wishing to request reasonable accommodation during the meeting should send their requests to ITAC@state.gov no later than March 1, 2018. Requests made after that time will be considered, but might not be able to be fulfilled.

Please send all inquiries to ITAC@state.gov.

Stephan A. Lang,

Acting Director, Multilateral Affairs, Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy, U.S. Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2018–03594 Filed 2–21–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–AE–P**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

[Docket No. MCF 21079]

Academy Bus, LLC and Franmar Leasing LLC—Purchase of Certain Assets of Daniel’s Charters & Tours LLC

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.
ACTION: Notice tentatively approving and authorizing finance transaction.

SUMMARY: On January 23, 2018, Academy Bus LLC (Academy), a motor carrier of passengers; Franmar Leasing LLC (Franmar), a non-carrier; and Daniel’s Charters & Tours LLC (Daniel’s Charters), a motor carrier of passengers (collectively, Applicants) jointly filed an

application for Academy and Franmar to acquire certain properties of Daniel's Charters. The Board is tentatively approving and authorizing the transaction, and, if no opposing comments are timely filed, this notice will be the final Board action. Persons wishing to oppose the application must follow Board rules.

DATES: Comments must be filed by April 9, 2018. The applicants may file a reply by April 23, 2018. If no opposing comments are filed by April 9, 2018, this notice shall be effective on April 10, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of any comments referring to Docket No. MCF 21079 to: Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, send one copy of comments to: Joseph J. Ferrara, Ferrara and Associates, 111 Paterson Avenue, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah Fancher (202) 245-0355. Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) for the hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Academy is a motor carrier licensed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (MC-646780) that provides motor carrier passenger services in Florida and Georgia, with its principal place of business located in Florida. (Appl. 3, 8.) Applicants state that Academy (Florida) ESB Trust (Academy Trust), a non-carrier controlled by Francis Tedesco (the sole trustee), is the sole member of Academy. According to Applicants, Franmar is a non-carrier New Jersey limited liability company controlled by the Tedesco Family ESB Trust (Tedesco Trust), also a non-carrier. Applicants state that Franmar is exclusively engaged in the ownership and leasing of passenger motor coaches to Academy and its affiliates.¹ Applicants further assert that Daniel's Charters, a licensed motor carrier of passengers (MC-351188), presently operates interstate charter motor coach transportation services and tour transportation services primarily in the state of Georgia. Applicants further state that Jimmy Cantrell is the majority

¹ Applicants state that Francis Tedesco and Mark Tedesco are lifetime beneficiaries of the Tedesco Trust, which controls a New Jersey company, also called Academy Bus, LLC, a non-carrier and the sole member of three limited liability company passenger motor carriers: Academy Express, LLC, Academy Lines, LLC, and Number 22 Hillside, LLC (together, Academy Companies). According to Applicants, none of the Academy Companies are parties to the agreement with Daniel's Charters that is the subject of this application. Applicants state that Franmar and the Tedesco Trust are commonly controlled by Francis Tedesco and Mark Tedesco. (See Appl. 5-6.)

member and manager of Daniel's Charters.

Daniel's Charters proposes to sell certain assets used in its motor coach passenger charter transportation business pursuant to an Asset Purchase Agreement, dated January 19, 2018. According to Applicants, this transaction is a result of the business determination made by Daniel's Charters to permanently withdraw from the motor coach transportation business and focus its efforts on the continued development of its tour business operations. Applicants state that, under the terms of the Asset Purchase Agreement, Academy will acquire Daniel's Charters' customer lists, charter contracts, telephone numbers, website, pending motor coach customer contracts existing as of the closing date, charter contract deposits associated with the pending contracts, and related assets and intangibles, and Franmar will acquire 32 of 34 motor coaches currently owned by Daniel's Charters. (Appl. 7.)

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), the Board must approve and authorize a transaction that it finds consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least: (1) The effect of the proposed transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public; (2) the total fixed charges that result; and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees. Applicants submitted information required by 49 CFR 1182.2, including information to demonstrate that the proposed transaction is consistent with the public interest under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b) and a statement, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 14303(g), that Academy and its motor carrier affiliated companies exceeded \$2 million in gross operating revenues for the preceding 12-month period.²

Applicants state that this acquisition is in the public interest because the transaction will not have a materially detrimental impact on the adequacy of transportation services available to the public. According to Applicants, Daniel's Charters will be selling all of its motor coach vehicles that it no longer desires to operate, no operable motor vehicles will be scrapped by Daniel's Charters, and no new buses will need to be purchased by Franmar at this time. Thus, Applicants state that the public would not lose service because the same number of buses would continue to operate. Applicants state that the transaction would promote more efficiencies and greater economic use of

² Applicants with gross operating revenues exceeding \$2 million are required to meet the requirements of 49 CFR 1182.2(a)(5).

existing transportation capital resources, and offer the public continued service options to those customers of Daniel's Charters in need of such service.

Applicants also assert that the proposed transaction would not result in an increase to fixed charges, as the proposed transaction is expected to be for cash.

Additionally, Applicants state that the proposed transaction would have no adverse effect on qualified Daniel's Charters' employees at the locations from which Daniel's Charters operates because Academy will interview and offer employment opportunities to those employees, which Applicants claim is "a necessity to permit Academy to continue to operate the assets acquired as a carrier."

According to Applicants, anticompetitive effects would be unlikely because none of the operable motor vehicles will be scrapped by the seller and no new buses will need to be purchased by Franmar at this time. Thus, Applicants state, the same number of buses presently operated will continue to be operated in Academy's bus operations in Georgia.³

On the basis of the application, the Board finds that the proposed acquisition is consistent with the public interest and should be tentatively approved and authorized. If any opposing comments are timely filed, these findings will be deemed vacated, and, unless a final decision can be made on the record as developed, a procedural schedule will be adopted to reconsider the application. See 49 CFR 1182.6(c). If no opposing comments are filed by the expiration of the comment period, this notice will take effect automatically and will be the final Board action.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.GOV."

This action is categorically excluded from environmental review under 49 CFR 1105.6(c).

It is ordered:

1. The proposed transaction is approved and authorized, subject to the filing of opposing comments.

2. If opposing comments are timely filed, the findings made in this notice will be deemed as having been vacated.

³ The Board notes that the Asset Purchase Agreement contains a non-compete agreement, which prohibits Daniel's Charters and its principal, for a period of time, from soliciting or otherwise competing with Academy in the geographic areas and jurisdictions in which Daniel's Charters currently conducts its motor coach operations. (Appl., Ex. at 35.) After a review of the contractual provision, however, the Board finds that the clause does not appear to have an anticompetitive effect, on balance, in the market.

3. This notice will be effective April 10, 2018, unless opposing comments are filed by April 9, 2018.

4. A copy of this notice will be served on: (1) The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590; (2) the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530; and (3) the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the General Counsel, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Decided: February 15, 2018.

By the Board, Board Members Begeman and Miller.

Brendetta S. Jones,
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2018-03644 Filed 2-21-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

[Docket No. USTR-2017-0024]

2018 Special 301 Review: Identification of Countries Under Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974; Request for Public Comment and Notice of a Public Hearing; Correction

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Request for comments and notice of public hearing; Correction.

SUMMARY: The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) published a document in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2017 (82 FR 61363), concerning a request for comments and notices of intent to appear at a public hearing on Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974, commonly referred to as the “Special 301” provisions. The dates specified in the notice have changed. Additional information on the hearing is also provided.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sung Chang, Director for Innovation and Intellectual Property, Office of the United States Trade Representative, at special301@ustr.eop.gov. You can find information about the Special 301 Review at www.ustr.gov.

Corrections

“Dates” Caption

In the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2017 (82 FR 61363), correct the “Dates” caption to read as follows:

DATES: *March 8, 2018:* The Special 301 Subcommittee will hold a public

hearing at the Office of the United States Trade Representative, 1724 F Street NW, Rooms 1&2, Washington DC. If necessary, the hearing may continue on the next business day. Please consult the USTR website for confirmation of the date and location and the schedule of witnesses.

March 14, 2018 at midnight EST: Deadline for submission of post-hearing written comments from persons who testified at the public hearing.

About April 30, 2018: USTR will publish the 2018 Special 301 Report within 30 days of the publication of the National Trade Estimate (NTE) Report.

“Background” Caption

In the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2017 (82 FR 61363), correct the “Background” caption to read as follows:

I. Background

Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974 (Trade Act) (19 U.S.C. 2242), commonly known as the “Special 301” provisions, requires the Trade Representative to identify countries that deny adequate and effective IPR protections or fair and equitable market access to U.S. persons who rely on intellectual property protection. The Trade Act requires the Trade Representative to determine which, if any, of these countries to identify as Priority Foreign Countries. Acts, policies or practices that are the basis of a country’s identification as a Priority Foreign Country can be subject to the procedures set out in sections 301–305 of the Trade Act (19 U.S.C. 2411–2415).

In addition, USTR has created a “Priority Watch List” and “Watch List” to assist the Administration in pursuing the goals of the Special 301 provisions. Placement of a trading partner on the Priority Watch List or Watch List indicates that particular problems exist in that country with respect to IPR protection, enforcement or market access for persons that rely on intellectual property protection. Trading partners placed on the Priority Watch List are the focus of increased bilateral attention concerning the problem areas.

USTR chairs the Special 301 Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the Trade Policy Staff Committee. The Subcommittee reviews information from many sources, and consults with and makes recommendations to the Trade Representative on issues arising under Special 301. Written submissions from the public are a key source of information for the Special 301 review process. In 2018, USTR will conduct a public hearing as part of the review process and will allow hearing

participants to provide additional information relevant to the review. At the conclusion of the process, USTR will publish the results of the review in a Special 301 Report.

USTR requests that interested persons identify through the process outlined in this notice those countries whose acts, policies, or practices deny adequate and effective protection for intellectual property rights or deny fair and equitable market access to U.S. persons who rely on intellectual property protection.

Section 182 also requires the Trade Representative to identify any act, policy, or practice of Canada that affects cultural industries, was adopted or expanded after December 17, 1992, and is actionable under Article 2106 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). USTR invites the public to submit views relevant to this aspect of the review.

Section 182 requires the Trade Representative to identify all such acts, policies, or practices within 30 days of the publication of the NTE Report. In accordance with this statutory requirement, USTR will publish the annual Special 301 Report about April 30, 2018.

“Public Comments” Caption

In the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2017 (82 FR 61363), correct the “Public Comments” caption to read as follows:

II. Public Comments

To facilitate the review, written comments should be as detailed as possible and provide all necessary information to identify and assess the effect of the acts, policies, and practices. USTR invites written comments that provide specific references to laws, regulations, policy statements, including innovation policies, executive, presidential, or other orders, and administrative, court, or other determinations that should factor in the review. USTR also requests that, where relevant, submissions mention particular regions, provinces, states, or other subdivisions of a country in which an act, policy, or practice is believed to warrant special attention. Finally, submissions proposing countries for review should include data, loss estimates, and other information regarding the economic impact on the United States, U.S. industry, and the U.S. workforce caused by the denial of adequate and effective intellectual property protection. Comments that include quantitative loss claims should include the methodology used to calculate the estimated losses.