

Enhancing Global Electronic Commerce" will be held on July 24, 1997 at the Green Auditorium, Administration Building, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD.

Copies of written submissions received by July 16, 1997, will be made available at the Public Forum.

Issues for Public Comment and Themes of the Public Forum

The emergence of a public key infrastructure, and the demands of global electronic commerce, have generated significant private sector and governmental efforts to develop a reliable system of certificate authorities that enable use of trustworthy digital signatures.

The Department of Commerce, and other Executive Branch agencies, seek public comment on and are planning a Public Forum that encompasses the following issues. By seeking comment from the varied parties and interests, reflecting the many initiatives that are underway, the Executive Branch will be better able to assess emerging initiatives on digital signatures and certificate authorities; ensure that the federal government's PKI activities take advantage of the latest developments and directions in the private sector; and aid federal government officials and industry representatives participating in domestic and international fora on these issues.

1. *State government initiatives through "digital signature laws."* Some two dozen states have passed some form of "digital signature laws" in the last two years. The Department encourages comments from relevant state government agencies on the experiences and issues that have arisen during the process of implementing these laws, including the status of any registration of certificate authorities. Comments that reflect the systematic aspects of digital signature laws are especially encouraged. Comments are also encouraged by users and stakeholders in the systems that result from passage of these "digital signature laws."

2. *The evolving legal framework of certificate authorities and digital signatures.* A number of private sector efforts are underway to examine and recommend changes to the legal and regulatory framework that could contribute to a reliable system of certificate authorities. The Department notes the efforts, among others, of the American Bar Association ("Digital Signature Guidelines") and the National Commission on Uniform State Laws. The Department encourages comments

from all private sector efforts which are undertaking efforts in this area.

3. *The technology and business challenges of certificate authorities and digital signatures.* In response to user demands, an industry of certificate authorities is emerging. The Department seeks comments from those entities that are offering services and technologies that relate to issuing certificates and digital signatures.

4. *User requirements and expectations.* A multitude of sectors can be expected to utilize a reliable system of certificate authorities and digital signatures. The Department seeks comments from any and all sectors that are developing performance requirements and user expectations in this area. Comments are encouraged from non-profits and governmental entities, as well as for-profit enterprises.

5. *An international perspective.* A number of countries and international fora are examining the issues of a reliable system of certificate authorities and use of digital signatures. The Department notes the activities of UNCITRAL, the OECD, as well as recent developments in Germany, Japan, the European Union, etc. The Department invites comments from international representatives on the issues outlined in this notice and participation in the Public Forum.

Comments received in response to this notice will be made part of the public record and will be available for inspection and copying in the Central Reference and Records Inspection Facility, Room 6020, Herbert C. Hoover Building, 14th Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, NW, Washington, DC 20230. The Department intends to publish the proceedings of the Public Forum, and all public comments, as soon as possible after the July 24th meeting.

Dated: June 3, 1997.

Mary L. Good,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology.

[FR Doc. 97-14991 Filed 6-6-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Technology Administration

Notice of Public Meeting on the Proposed Experimental Program To Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT)

AGENCY: Technology Administration, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: The Technology Administration will hold an open meeting on June 27, 1997 to solicit input

on the proposed Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT) from representatives of state and local government, universities, and the private- and non-profit sectors, who are involved with technology development, diffusion, commercialization, and using technology to promote economic growth. The purpose of the meeting is to determine what activities are currently being conducted in the states to foster technology-based economic growth and how a new competitive, cost-shared federal grant program with the mission of fostering the development of indigenous technology assets in states that are traditionally under represented in Federal R&D funding could be structured. The following states would currently be eligible to participate in the EPSCoT: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, June 27, 1997 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, New Orleans, Louisiana. Individuals wishing to attend the meeting should contact Maureen Wood, Office of the Under Secretary for Technology, at (202) 482-1091 by close of business June 25, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anita Balachandra, Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce at (202) 482-1320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Technology Administration (TA) is proposing a new, competitive, matching grant program called the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT) to foster the development of indigenous technology assets in states that traditionally have been under represented in the distribution of Federal R&D expenditures.

Technology is the engine of economic growth and, as such, its development, deployment, and diffusion are critical to U.S. competitiveness. Although it is often said that nations do not compete, companies do, it is apparent that sub-national units—regions within states and clusters of states—do compete, not simply with one another, but also internationally. This is because in a global economy, capital, labor, and technology are increasingly mobile and they are attracted to regions with the most promising opportunities. To this

end, regional policies and infrastructures play a large role in determining both where companies locate and their ability to be competitive in a global marketplace.

Commerce Department research shows that firms that adopt advanced technologies create more jobs at higher wages than those that do not. Furthermore, regions that boast concentrations of high-tech industries enjoy high growth rates and standards of living. Regions thus compete to attract federal research facilities, private investment, and skilled labor. Recent research suggests that a region's technological infrastructure is among the most important factors that businesses consider when making location decisions. Accordingly, regions are searching for strategies to attract and retain high-tech firms and the jobs that they bring. These strategies may involve building on existing strengths at research universities, providing extension services to local businesses, or integrating existing business assistance resources, but ultimately their success is contingent upon an institutional capacity to support technology-based economic development.

In the Federal government's efforts to foster competitiveness, it must ensure that all regions of the nation develop the necessary infrastructure to support indigenous technology development. Most less populated states, whose manufacturers tend to be small- and medium-sized, are at a competitive disadvantage because there is generally no research base on which local businesses can build. The EPSCoT seeks to remedy this disadvantage.

The EPSCoT seeks to build on the NSF's successful Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) which was established in 1979 to stimulate sustainable improvements in the quality of the academic science and technology infrastructure of states that traditionally have been under represented in receiving federal R&D funds. Within these states, the EPSCoR's primary emphasis is on improving the competitive performance of major research universities. By focusing on building the science base of these regions, primarily in universities, the EPSCoR has successfully strengthened the research capacity of universities in these states; yet, there remains a technology "gap."

Improving the competitive performance of universities, which is an essential component of a successful technology-based economy, is often not sufficient to establish new companies,

develop new job opportunities or raise the standard of living.

That is why the Department of Commerce proposes to create an EPSCoT—the technology counterpart to the EPSCoR. EPSCoT would help to bridge the gap between university research and the local economy. It would develop essential economic development tools to foster regional technology-based economic growth. The program would stimulate the development of indigenous technological infrastructure and institutional capabilities of states through a variety of means, including outreach activities, technology development and deployment, technology transfer, education and training, and better linking universities, firms, and state and local governments.

Dated: June 2, 1997.

Gary Bachula,

Deputy Under Secretary for Technology.

[FR Doc. 97-14990 Filed 6-6-97; 8:45 am]

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COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Notice of Meeting

The Commission of Fine Arts' next meeting is scheduled for 19 June 1997 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission's offices in the Pension Building, Suite 312, Judiciary Square, 441 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 to discuss various projects affecting the appearance of Washington, DC including buildings, memorials, parks, etc.; also matters of design referred by other agencies of the government.

Inquiries regarding the agenda and requests to submit written or oral statements should be addressed to Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts, at the above address or call 202-504-2200.

Dated in Washington, D.C., 2 June 1997.

Charles H. Atherton,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-14932 Filed 6-6-97; 8:45 am]

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Adjustment of Import Limits for Certain Cotton, Man-Made Fiber, Silk Blend and Other Vegetable Fiber Textile Products Produced or Manufactured in Bangladesh

June 3, 1997.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Issuing a directive to the Commissioner of Customs adjusting limits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 10, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ross Arnold, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4212. For information on the quota status of these limits, refer to the Quota Status Reports posted on the bulletin boards of each Customs port or call (202) 927-5850. For information on embargoes and quota re-openings, call (202) 482-3715.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended; section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854); Uruguay Round Agreements Act.

The current limits for certain categories are being adjusted, variously, for swing, special shift and carryforward.

A description of the textile and apparel categories in terms of HTS numbers is available in the CORRELATION: Textile and Apparel Categories with the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (see **Federal Register** notice 61 FR 66263, published on December 17, 1996). Also see 61 FR 68241, published on December 27, 1996.

The letter to the Commissioner of Customs and the actions taken pursuant to it are not designed to implement all of the provisions of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act and the Uruguay Round Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, but are designed to assist only in the implementation of certain of their provisions.

D. Michael Hutchinson,

Acting Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements

June 3, 1997.

Commissioner of Customs,
Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20229.