

negotiations on review and expansion of the ITA. Any amendments to the ITA resulting from these negotiations will be subject to approval by all of the 42 current ITA participants (Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, European Communities (on behalf of 15 Member States), Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and the United States). It is expected that other participants to the ITA will be conducting similar consultations with their private sectors.

BACKGROUND: During the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, the United States sought, but did not achieve, the reciprocal elimination by WTO members of tariffs on information technology products. With the encouragement and support of a broad coalition of major U.S. information technology manufacturers, the Administration continued to pursue this objective after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. In December 1996, United States and 36 other countries and separate customs territories reached agreement to eliminate tariffs on a wide range of information technology products. The resulting agreement covers computers and computer equipment, semiconductors and integrated circuits, computer software products, telecommunications equipment, semiconductor manufacturing equipment and computer-based analytical instruments. The Information Technology Agreement (ITA), the recently concluded WTO agreement on basic telecommunications services, and other trade initiatives are all elements of the "Framework for Global Electronic Commerce" issued by President Clinton and Vice President Gore on July 1, 1997. The Administration's goal is to establish a seamless global electronic marketplace free from tariff and other market access barriers (such as those created by standards-related activities). The Framework report can be downloaded from the Internet, at http://www.iitf.nist.gov/electronic_commerce.htm.

The ITA is being implemented under the auspices of the WTO. The WTO estimates that products covered by the ITA are worth approximately \$500 billion in 1995 global trade. Industry sources estimate that U.S. exports account for approximately one-fifth of this total. Detailed information on the

ITA, including the December 1996 Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products and its "product coverage" annex and the March 1997 decision which also includes detailed information on the ITA review can be found on the Internet at <http://www.wto.org/wto/goods/infotech.htm>.

On June 30, 1997, under the authority provided in Section 111(b) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, the President proclaimed the reduction and eventual elimination, no later than the year 2000, of duties on products covered by the ITA. As required by the agreement, the United States implemented the initial ITA duty reductions on July 1, 1997. Likewise, other ITA participants will continue to reduce their tariffs on the covered products in stages, achieving complete tariff elimination for most products by the year 2000. The ITA, the recently concluded WTO agreement on basic telecommunications services, and other trade initiatives are all elements of the Administration's framework for establishing a seamless global electronic marketplace.

At the March 26, 1997 meeting at the WTO in Geneva, ITA participants agreed on a timetable for the first round of "ITA-II" negotiations. Beginning in October 1997, there will be a three month "open season," in which participants will identify their priorities for this process. Multilateral negotiations will begin in January 1998, with a view to reaching agreement on any amendments or modifications to the ITA by July 1998 and to implementing those changes on January 1, 1999.

Working with appropriate industry associations, the interagency TPSC committee led by USTR is in the process of preparing negotiating positions for these consultations. Interested U.S. parties are invited to submit comments, by noon, September 30, 1997, on the following: (1) Discrepancies between current tariff nomenclature and emerging technology which may affect the expected market access benefits to the United States of the ITA; (2) additional information technology products which it would be in the interests of the United States to include in the ITA; (3) expansion of the ITA to ensure a tariff-free environment for information products and services transmitted via the Internet; (4) non-tariff barriers imposed by other ITA participants which may hinder expected market access benefits to U.S. exporters on products covered by the ITA; and (5) possible acceleration of ITA duty reductions previously agreed. We are

requesting this advice pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2155.

All comments will be consistent in developing U.S. positions and objectives for ITA-II negotiations, and for implementing the President's "Framework for Global Electronic Commerce." Information on products or practices subject to these negotiations should include, whenever appropriate, the import or export tariff classification number for the product concerned.

Persons submitting written comments should provide a statement, in twenty copies, by noon, September 30, 1997, to Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, TPSC, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Room 503, 600 17th Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20508. Non-confidential information received will be available for public inspection by appointment in the USTR Reading Room, Room 101, Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. For an appointment call Brenda Webb on 202-395-6186. Business confidential information will be subject to the requirements of 15 CFR § 2003.6. Any business confidential material must be clearly marked as such on the cover letter or page and each succeeding page, and must be accompanied by a non-confidential summary thereof.

Frederick L. Montgomery,

Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

[FR Doc. 97-23368 Filed 9-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3190-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Process: Clark County, Nevada

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Revised notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that the previously noticed environmental process for the Northern and Western Las Vegas Beltway, Clark County, Nevada (57 FR 37863 dated August 20, 1992), is being terminated and withdrawn.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John T. Price, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Nevada Division, 705 N. Plaza St., Suite 220, Carson City, NV 89701, Telephone: 702-687-5320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 20, 1992, the FHWA issued a notice of intent in the **Federal Register** to advise that a Tier 1 environmental impact

statement (EIS) would be prepared for the above project. This Tier 1 EIS was approved on June 7, 1996, and a Record of Decision (ROD) was issued by FHWA on August 5, 1996. Subsequent to initiation of the Tier 1 EIS, Clark County committed to obtaining all rights-of-way and constructing an interim facility with local funds. The 20-year design facility was originally expected to be at least partially Federally funded. Recently, Clark County concluded that no Federal-aid Highway funds will be required. Since the use of Federal-aid Highway funds for the project are no longer anticipated, there is no major Federal action warranting FHWA's involvement in the environmental process.

Therefore, at the request of Clark County, Nevada, the previously noticed environmental process is hereby terminated and withdrawn. FHWA will not prepare a Tier 2 environmental document.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: August 27, 1997.

Alan J. Friesen,

Assistant Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Carson City, Nevada.

[FR Doc. 97-23347 Filed 9-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

VIA Rail Canada, Incorporated (Waiver Petition Docket Number RSGM-97-4)

VIA Rail Canada, Incorporated (VIA) seeks a temporary waiver of compliance with the Safety Glazing Standards, 49 CFR Part 223.9(c), which requires FRA certified glazing in all windows of passenger cars, for fifteen passenger coaches rebuilt in 1997. VIA states that the contractor who rebuilt the cars

failed to equip the cars with FRA certified glazing. VIA plans to use the coaches to operate a special train on September 21, 1997, between Toronto, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York, for Canadian Buffalo Bills fans. A second trip is planned for November 1997. VIA is working with the contractor to replace the windows with FRA certified glazing and requests the waiver to ensure the equipment is available. VIA states that the fifteen coaches have standard VIA safety glazing in all locations and are equipped with four emergency egress windows per coach, not FRA certified.

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 party desires an opportunity for oral comment, 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 (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number RSGM-97-4) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Mail Stop 10, Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received within 30 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. Any protest to the special train movement of September 21, 1997, must be filed prior to September 15, 1997. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at FRA's temporary docket room located at 1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 7051, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1997.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator, for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 97-23312 Filed 9-2-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[FTA Docket No. 97-2866]

Notice of Request for the Extension of Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to extend the following currently approved information collection: Environmental Assessments.

DATES: Comments must be submitted before November 3, 1997.

ADDRESSES: All written comments must refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document and be submitted to the United States Department of Transportation, Central Dockets Office, Pub. L. 401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard/envelope.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: *Environmental Assessments*—Mr. Joseph Ossi, Office of Planning, (202) 366-1613.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the FTA; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the collected information. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection.

Title: Environmental Assessments (OMB Number: 2132-0011).

Background: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1960, as amended, and its implementing regulations, require that all Federal agencies consider and document the social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions. For FTA, approvals of grants to State