

formula, the "old-law" contribution and benefit base shall be the larger of (1) the 1994 "old-law" base (\$45,000) multiplied by the ratio of the national average wage index for 1996 to that for 1992, or (2) the current "old-law" base (\$48,600). If the amount so determined is not a multiple of \$300, it shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$300.

Amount. The ratio of the national average wage index for 1996, \$25,913.90, compared to that for 1992, \$22,935.42, is 1.1298638. Multiplying the 1994 "old-law" contribution and benefit base amount of \$45,000 by the ratio of 1.1298638 produces the amount of \$50,843.87 which must then be rounded to \$50,700. Because \$50,700 exceeds the current amount of \$48,600, the "old-law" contribution and benefit base is determined to be \$50,700 for 1998.

Substantial Gainful Activity Amount for Blind Individuals

General. A finding of disability under titles II and XVI of the Act requires that a person be unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA). Under current regulations, a person who is not statutorily blind and who is earning more than \$500 a month (net of impairment-related work expenses) is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The Social Security Amendments of 1977 established a higher SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals by setting their monthly SGA amount to the monthly exempt amount for persons aged 65 through 69 under the retirement earnings test provisions of the Act. Section 102 of Pub. L. 104-121 increased the earnings test exempt amount for persons aged 65 through 69 to specific levels for 1996-2002. Section 102 further provided that the SGA amount for blind individuals be the same as it would have been if section 102 had not been enacted.

Computation. Under the formula in section 203(f)(8)(B) in effect prior to the enactment of Pub. L. 104-121, the monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals for 1998 shall be the larger of (1) such amount for 1994 multiplied by the ratio of the national average wage index for 1996 to that for 1992, or (2) such amount for 1997. Section 203(f)(8)(B) further provides that if the amount so determined is not a multiple of \$10, it shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$10.

SGA Amount for Statutorily Blind Individuals. The ratio of the national average wage index for 1996, \$25,913.90, compared to that for 1992, \$22,935.42, is 1.1298638. Multiplying the 1994 monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals of \$930 by

the ratio of 1.1298638 produces the amount of \$1,050.77. This must then be rounded to \$1,050. Because \$1,050 is larger than the current amount of \$1,000, the monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals is determined to be \$1,050 for 1998.

Domestic Employee Coverage Threshold

General. Section 2 of the "Social Security Domestic Employment Reform Act of 1994" (Pub. L. 103-387) increased the threshold for coverage of a domestic employee's wages paid per employer from \$50 per calendar quarter to \$1,000 in calendar year 1994. The statute holds the coverage threshold at the \$1,000 level for 1995 and then increases the threshold in \$100 increments for years after 1995. The formula for increasing the threshold is provided in section 3121(x) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Computation. Under the formula, the domestic employee coverage threshold amount for 1998 shall be equal to the 1995 amount of \$1,000 multiplied by the ratio of the national average wage index for 1996 to that for 1993. If the amount so determined is not a multiple of \$100, it shall be rounded to the next lower multiple of \$100.

Domestic Employee Coverage Threshold Amount. The ratio of the national average wage index for 1996, \$25,913.90, compared to that for 1993, \$23,132.67, is 1.1202295. Multiplying the 1995 domestic employee coverage threshold amount of \$1,000 by the ratio of 1.1202295 produces the amount of \$1,120.23, which must then be rounded to \$1,100. Accordingly, the domestic employee coverage threshold amount is determined to be \$1,100 for 1998.

OASDI Fund Ratio

General. Section 215(i) of the Act provides for automatic cost-of-living increases in OASDI benefit amounts. This section also includes a "stabilizer" provision that can limit the automatic OASDI benefit increase under certain circumstances. If the combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds, as a percentage of annual expenditures, are below a specified threshold, the automatic benefit increase is equal to the lesser of (1) the increase in the national average wage index or (2) the increase in prices. The threshold specified for the OASDI fund ratio is 20.0 percent for benefit increases for December of 1989 and later. The law also provides for subsequent "catch-up" benefit increases for beneficiaries whose previous benefit increases were affected by this provision. "Catch-up" benefit increases can occur only when trust

fund assets exceed 32.0 percent of annual expenditures.

Computation. Section 215(i) specifies the computation and application of the OASDI fund ratio. The OASDI fund ratio for 1997 is the ratio of (1) the combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds at the beginning of 1997 to (2) the estimated expenditures of the OASI and DI Trust Funds during 1997, excluding transfer payments between the OASI and DI Trust Funds, and reducing any transfers to the Railroad Retirement Account by any transfers from that account into either trust fund.

Ratio. The combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds at the beginning of 1997 equaled \$566,950 million, and the expenditures are estimated to be \$370,842 million. Thus, the OASDI fund ratio for 1997 is 152.9 percent, which exceeds the applicable threshold of 20.0 percent. Therefore, the stabilizer provision does not affect the benefit increase for December 1997. Although the OASDI fund ratio exceeds the 32.0-percent threshold for potential "catch-up" benefit increases, no past benefit increase has been reduced under the stabilizer provision. Thus, no "catch-up" benefit increase is required.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: Program Nos. 96.001 Social Security-Disability Insurance; 96.002 Social Security-Retirement Insurance; 96.003 Social Security-Special Benefits for Persons Aged 72 and Over; 96.004 Social Security-Survivors Insurance; 96.006 Supplemental Security Income)

Dated: October 22, 1997.

Kenneth S. Apfel,

Commissioner, Social Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 97-28496 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4190-29-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[Summary Notice No. PE-97-54]

Petitions for Exemption; Summary of Petitions Received; Dispositions of Petitions Issued

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of petitions for exemption received and of dispositions of prior petitions.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to FAA's rulemaking provisions governing the application, processing, and disposition of petitions for exemption (14 CFR part 11), this notice contains a summary of certain petitions seeking relief from specified requirements of the Federal Aviation

Regulations (14 CFR Chapter I), dispositions of certain petitions previously received, and corrections. The purpose of this notice is to improve the public's awareness of, and participation in, this aspect of FAA's regulatory activities. Neither publication of this notice nor the inclusion or omission of information in the summary is intended to affect the legal status of any petition or its final disposition.

DATES: Comments on petitions received must identify the petition docket number involved and must be received on or before November 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send comments on any petition in triplicate to: Federal Aviation Administration, Office of the Chief Counsel, Attn: Rule Docket (AGC-200), Petition Docket No. 24041, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20591.

Comments may also be sent electronically to the following internet address: 9-NPRM-CMSTS@faa.dot.gov.

The petition, any comments received, and a copy of any final disposition are filed in the assigned regulatory docket and are available for examination in the Rules Docket (AGC-200), Room 915G, FAA Headquarters Building (FOB 10A), 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20591; telephone (202) 267-3132.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Heather Thorson, (202) 267-7470, or Angela Anderson, (202) 267-9681, Office of Rulemaking (ARM-1), Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591.

This notice is published pursuant to paragraphs (c), (e), and (g) of § 11.27 of part 11 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 11).

Issued in Washington, D.C., on October 23, 1997.

Donald P. Byrne,

Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulations.

Dispositions of Petitions

Docket No: 24041.

Petitioner: Bulter Aircraft Co.

Sections of the FAR Affected: 14 CFR 91.529(a)(1).

Description of Relief Sought/

Disposition: To permit the petitioner to operate McDonnell Douglas DC-6 and DC-7 aircraft without a flight engineer during flightcrew training, ferry operations, and test flights that are conducted to prepare for firefighting operations conducted under 14 CFR part 137.

Grant, October 9, 1997, Exemption No. 2989I.

[FR Doc. 97-28752 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. 2983]

Notice of Request for Reinstatement of Expired Information Collection

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), USDOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the requirement of Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the FHWA to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to reinstate the information collection entitled Highway Safety and Improvement Program and Priorities.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 29, 1997.

ADDRESSES: All signed, written comments should refer to the docket number that appears in the heading of this document and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. 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.

Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including, but not limited to: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the FHWA; (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 clearance of this information collection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Kenneth Epstein, Office of Highway Safety, (202) 366-2157, 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Highway Safety and Improvement Program and Priorities.
OMB No: 2125-0025.

Background: Each year all States and Territories are required to report to the

Secretary of Transportation on the progress being made in implementing the Highway Safety Improvement Programs (Rail-Highway Crossings and Hazard Elimination) and the effectiveness of these programs. The Secretary is required to report annually to the Congress on the progress of the safety programs based upon the information reported by the States. The FHWA receives the program information from the States. Numerical data are processed and stored in the computerized Highway Safety Evaluation System. A report is then prepared for Congress providing the required information on the effectiveness of highway safety improvement projects. Congress uses the contents of this report when determining the level of funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Programs and when modifying these programs.

The information collected by the States in the survey of all public roads includes motor vehicle accident data, traffic volume data, and highway inventory data. This information is used by the States to identify hazards and to determine what safety improvements would be cost-effective when mitigating those hazards. Without this process fewer lives would be saved and fewer injuries averted by the Highway Safety Improvement Programs administered by the FHWA.

Respondents: The overall annual reporting burden is shared by the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: The annual reporting burden is estimated to be 11,220 hours.

Frequency: The respondents are required to report on an annual basis.

Authority: Title 23, U.S. Code, Section 130; 23 U.S.C. 152, 23 CFR 924.

Issued on: October 17, 1997.

Diana Zeidel,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Administration.

[FR Doc. 97-28764 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. 97-2934]

Notice of Request for Renewal of an Existing Information Collection

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of