

statutory time limit of 365 days. Because of the complexity and novelty of certain issues in this case, it is not practicable to complete this review within the statutory time limit of 365 days. The Department, therefore, is extending the time limit for the preliminary results of the aforementioned review to August 31, 1998. See memorandum from Joseph A. Spetrini to Robert S. LaRussa, which is on file in Room B-099 at the Department's headquarters. The deadline for the final results of this review will continue to be 90 days after publication of the preliminary results.

This extension of time limit is in accordance with section 751(a)(3)(A) of the Act and section 351.213(h)(2) of the Department's regulations.

Dated: April 22, 1998.

**Joseph A. Spetrini,**

*Deputy Assistant Secretary AD/CVD Enforcement Group III.*

[FR Doc. 98-11273 Filed 4-27-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### International Trade Administration

[C-423-809, C-475-823, C-580-832, and C-791-806]

#### Initiation of Countervailing Duty Investigations: Stainless Steel Plate in Coils From Belgium, Italy, the Republic of Korea, and the Republic of South Africa

**AGENCY:** Import Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 28, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Zak Smith (Belgium), at (202) 482-1279; Cynthia Thirumalai (Italy), at (202) 482-4087; Christopher Cassel (the Republic of Korea), at (202) 482-4847; and Dana Mermelstein (the Republic of South Africa), at (202) 482-0984, Import Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 1870, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20230.

#### INITIATION OF INVESTIGATIONS:

#### The Applicable Statute and Regulations

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations to the statute are references to the provisions effective January 1, 1995, the effective date of the amendments made to the Tariff Act of 1930 (the Act) by the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA). In addition, unless otherwise indicated, all citations to the Department's regulations are to the current regulations published in the

**Federal Register** on May 19, 1997 (62 FR 27296).

#### The Petition

On March 31, 1998, the Department of Commerce (the Department) received a petition filed in proper form by or on behalf of Armco Inc., J&L Specialty Steel, Inc., Lukens Inc., United Steel Workers of America, AFL-CIO/CLC, Butler Armco Independent Union, and Zanesville Armco Independent Organization, Inc. (the petitioners). Armco Inc., J&L Specialty Steel, Inc., and Lukens Inc. are U.S. producers of stainless steel plate in coils (plate in coils). J&L Specialty Steel, Inc. is not a petitioner to the countervailing duty investigation involving Belgium. Supplements to the petition were filed on April 14, 15, 16, 17, and 20, 1998.

In accordance with section 702(b)(1) of the Act, petitioners allege that manufacturers, producers, or exporters of the subject merchandise in Belgium, Italy, the Republic of Korea (Korea), and the Republic of South Africa (South Africa) receive countervailable subsidies within the meaning of section 701 of the Act.

The petitioners state that they have standing to file the petition because they are interested parties, as defined under sections 771(9)(c) and (d) of the Act.

#### Scope of the Investigations

For purposes of these investigations, the product covered is certain stainless steel plate in coils. Stainless steel is an alloy steel containing, by weight, 1.2 percent or less of carbon and 10.5 percent or more of chromium, with or without other elements. The subject plate products are flat-rolled products, 254 mm or over in width and 4.75 mm or more in thickness, in coils, and annealed or otherwise heat treated and pickled or otherwise descaled. The subject plate may also be further processed (e.g., cold-rolled, polished, etc.) provided that it maintains the specified dimensions of plate following such processing. Excluded from the scope of this petition are the following: (1) plate not in coils, (2) plate that is not annealed or otherwise heat treated and pickled or otherwise descaled, (3) sheet and strip, and (4) flat bars.

The merchandise subject to this investigation is currently classifiable in the *Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States* (HTS) at subheadings: 7219.11.00.30, 7219.11.00.60, 7219.12.00.05, 7219.12.00.20, 7219.12.00.25, 7219.12.00.50, 7219.12.00.55, 7219.12.00.65, 7219.12.00.70, 7219.12.00.80, 7219.31.00.10, 7219.90.00.10, 7219.90.00.20, 7219.90.00.25,

7219.90.00.60, 7219.90.00.80, 7220.11.00.00, 7220.20.10.10, 7220.20.10.15, 7220.20.10.60, 7220.20.10.80, 7220.20.60.05, 7220.20.60.10, 7220.20.60.15, 7220.20.60.60, 7220.20.60.80, 7220.90.00.10, 7220.90.00.15, 7220.90.00.60, and 7220.90.00.80.

Although the HTS subheadings are provided for convenience and Customs purposes, the written description of the merchandise under investigation is dispositive.

During our review of the petition, we discussed the scope with the petitioners to insure that the scope in the petition accurately reflects the product for which the domestic industry is seeking relief. Moreover, as we discussed in the preamble to the new regulations (62 FR 27323), we are setting aside a period for parties to raise issues regarding product coverage. The Department encourages all parties to submit such comments by May 8, 1998. Comments should be addressed to Import Administration's Central Records Unit at Room 1870, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20230. The period of scope consultations is intended to provide the Department with ample opportunity to consider all comments and consult with parties prior to the issuance of the preliminary determinations.

#### Consultations

Pursuant to section 702(b)(4)(A)(ii) of the Act, the Department invited representatives of the relevant foreign governments for consultations with respect to the petition filed. On April 15, 1998, the Department held consultations with representatives of the governments of Italy and Belgium, and the European Commission (EC). On April 19, 1998, consultations were held with representatives of the government of South Africa. See the April 20, 1998, memoranda to the file regarding these consultations (public documents on file in the Central Records Unit of the Department of Commerce, Room B-099).

#### Determination of Industry Support for the Petition

Section 702(b)(1) of the Act requires that a petition be filed on behalf of the domestic industry. Section 702(c)(4)(A) of the Act provides that a petition meets this requirement if the domestic producers or workers who support the petition account for: (1) at least 25 percent of the total production of the domestic like product; and (2) more than 50 percent of the production of the domestic like product produced by that

portion of the industry expressing support for, or opposition to, the petition.

Section 771(4)(A) of the Act defines the "industry" as the producers of a domestic like product. Thus, to determine whether the petition has the requisite industry support, the statute directs the Department to look to producers and workers who account for production of the domestic like product. The International Trade Commission (ITC), which is responsible for determining whether "the domestic industry" has been injured, must also determine what constitutes a domestic like product in order to define the industry. While both the Department and the ITC must apply the same statutory definition of domestic like product (section 771(10) of the Act), they do so for different purposes and pursuant to separate and distinct authority. In addition, the Department's determination is subject to limitations of time and information. Although this may result in different definitions of the like product, such differences do not render the decision of either agency contrary to the law.<sup>1</sup>

Section 771(10) of the Act defines domestic like product as "a product that is like, or in the absence of like, most similar in characteristics and uses with, the article subject to an investigation under this title." Thus, the reference point from which the domestic like product analysis begins is "the article subject to an investigation," i.e., the class or kind of merchandise to be investigated, which normally will be the scope as defined in the petition.

The domestic like product referred to in the petition is the single domestic like product defined in the "Scope of Investigation" section, above. The Department has no basis to find the petition's definition of the domestic like product to be inaccurate. The Department has, therefore, adopted the domestic like product definition set forth in the petition. For these investigations, petitioners have established a level of support for the petition commensurate with the statutory requirements. Accordingly, the Department determines that the petition was filed on behalf of the domestic industry within the meaning of section 702(b)(1) of the Act. See the April 20, 1998, memoranda to the file regarding industry support (public versions of the

documents on file in the Central Records Unit of the Department of Commerce, Room B-099).

### Injury Test

Because Belgium, Italy, Korea, and South Africa are "Subsidies Agreement Countries" within the meaning of section 701(b) of the Act, section 701(a)(2) applies to these investigations. Accordingly, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) must determine whether imports of the subject merchandise from these countries materially injure, or threaten material injury to, a U.S. industry.

### Allegations and Evidence of Material Injury and Causation

The petition alleges that the U.S. industry producing the domestic like product is being materially injured, and is threatened with material injury, by reason of the individual and cumulated subsidized imports of the subject merchandise. The allegations of injury and causation are supported by relevant evidence including business proprietary data from the petitioning firms and U.S. Customs import data. The Department assessed the allegations and supporting evidence regarding material injury and causation, and determined that these allegations are sufficiently supported by accurate and adequate evidence and meet the statutory requirements for initiation. See the April 20, 1998, memoranda to the file regarding the initiation of these investigations (public documents on file in the Central Records Unit of the Department of Commerce, Room B-099).

### Allegations of Subsidies

Section 702(b) of the Act requires the Department to initiate a countervailing duty proceeding whenever an interested party files a petition, on behalf of an industry, that (1) alleges the elements necessary for an imposition of a duty under section 701(a), and (2) is accompanied by information reasonably available to petitioners supporting the allegations.

### Initiation of Countervailing Duty Investigations

The Department has examined the petition on plate in coils from Belgium, Italy, Korea, and South Africa and found that it complies with the requirements of section 702(b) of the Act. Therefore, in accordance with section 702(b) of the Act, we are initiating countervailing duty investigations to determine whether manufacturers, producers, or exporters of plate in coils from these countries receive subsidies. See the April 20, 1998, memoranda to the file

regarding the initiation of these investigations (public documents on file in the Central Records Unit of the Department of Commerce, Room B-099).

### A. Belgium

We are including in our investigation the following programs alleged in the petition to have provided subsidies to producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Belgium:

1. *1993 Expansion Grant*
2. *1994 Environmental Grant*
3. *"Investment and Interest" Subsidies*
4. *Funding for Early Retirement*
5. *Societe Nationale de Credite a l'Industrie (SNCI) Loans*
6. *Belgian Industrial Finance Company (Belfin) Loans*
7. *Societe Nationale pour la Reconstruction des Secteurs Nationaux (SNSN) Advances*
8. *Benefits pursuant to the Economic Expansion Law of 1970 (1970 Law)*
  - a. Grants and Interest Rebates
  - b. Corporate Income Tax Exemption
  - c. Accelerated Depreciation
  - d. Real Estate Tax Exemption
  - e. Capital Registration Tax Exemption
  - f. Government Loan Guarantees
  - g. Employment "Premiums"
9. *Industrial Reconversion Zones (Inclusive of the "Herstellwet" Law)*
10. *Special Depreciation Allowance*
11. *Preferential Short-Term Export Credit*
12. *Interest Rate Rebates*
13. *Subsidies Provided to Sidmar that are Attributable to ALZ N.V. (ALZ)*
  - a. Assumption of Sidmar's Debt
  - b. SidInvest
  - c. Water Purification Grants
14. *1984 Debt to Equity Conversion and Purchase of ALZ Shares*

### European Commission Programs

1. *ECSC Article 54 Loans & Interest Rebates*
2. *ECSC Article 56 Conversion Loans, Interest Rebates & Redeployment Aid*
3. *European Social Fund*
4. *European Regional Development Fund*
5. *Resider II Program*

We are not including in our investigation at this time the following programs alleged to be benefitting producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Belgium:

1. *"Employment Zone" grants and tax exemptions.* Petitioners allege that ALZ may have received non-recurring grants and tax exemptions under this program. Several Royal Decrees established "employment zones" to provide benefits to industries located in certain

<sup>1</sup> See *Algoma Steel Corp., Ltd. v. United States*, 688 F. Supp. 639, 642-44 (CIT 1988); *High Information Content Flat Panel Displays and Display Glass Therefor from Japan: Final Determination; Rescission of Investigation and Partial Dismissal of Petition*, 56 FR 32376, 32380-81 (July 16, 1991).

depressed regions. The evidence provided by petitioners does not indicate that ALZ is eligible to receive benefits from this program because it is not located in an employment zone. Therefore, we are not including this program in our investigation.

2. *Genk Plant capital investment by the Government of Belgium.* Petitioners allege that ALZ received a countervailable benefit from a "capital injection" made by state-owned investment companies and a partially state-owned steel firm. Petitioners allege that the benefit takes the form of either a grant, an equity infusion, or an interest-free loan under the Industrial Reconversion Zones mentioned above. The evidence provided by petitioner does not support the allegation that this capital injection was a grant. Moreover, the petitioners have not provided sufficient information indicating that any ALZ stock purchased was done so inconsistent with the usual investment practice of a private investor. To the extent that any government assistance received may constitute an interest-free loan under the Industrial Reconversion program, we will examine such assistance in the context of investigating that program.

#### B. Italy

We are including in our investigation the following programs alleged in the petition to have provided subsidies to producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Italy:

##### Government of Italy Programs

1. *Law 796/76: Exchange Rate Guarantee Program*
2. *Benefits Associated with the 1988-1990 Restructuring*
3. *Pre-Privatization Employment Benefits*
4. *Law 120/89 Recovery Plan for the Steel Industry*
5. *Law 181/89 Worker Adjustment/Redevelopment Assistance*
6. *Law 345/92 Benefits for Early Retirement*
7. *Law 706/85 Grants for Capacity Reduction*
8. *Law 488/92 Aid to Depressed Areas*
9. *Law 46/82 Assistance for Capacity Reduction*
10. *Working Capital Grants to ILVA, S.p.A. (ILVA)*
11. *ILVA Restructuring and Liquidation Grant*
12. *1994 Debt Payment Assistance by the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI)*
13. *Loan to KAI for purchase of Acciai Speciali Terni S.p.A. (AST)*
14. *Debt Forgiveness: 1981 Restructuring Plan*

15. *Debt Forgiveness: Finsider-to-ILVA Restructuring*
16. *Debt Forgiveness: ILVA-to-AST Restructuring*
17. *Law 675/77*
  - a. Mortgage Loans
  - b. Interest Contributions on IRI Loans
  - c. Personnel Retraining Aid
  - d. VAT Reductions
18. *Law 193/84*
  - a. Interest Payments
  - b. Closure Assistance
  - c. Early Retirement Benefits
19. *Law 394/81 Export Marketing Grants and Loans*
20. *Equity Infusions from 1978 through 1992*
21. *Uncreditworthiness for 1977 through 1997*
22. *Law 341/95 and Circolare 50175/95*

##### European Commission Programs

1. *EU Subsidy to AST to Construct a Mill*
2. *ECSC Article 54 Loans & Interest Rebates*
3. *ECSC Article 56 Conversion Loans, Interest Rebates & Redeployment Aid*
4. *European Social Fund*
5. *European Regional Development Fund*
6. *Resider II Program (and successor programs)*

We are not including in our investigation the following programs alleged to be benefitting producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Italy:

1. *Decree Law 357/91.* A translated portion of Law 357/91 provided by petitioners states that: [F]unds cannot be granted for investments concerning the following sections and production activities: (A) steel production as cited in Attachment 1 of the ECSC treaty.

Petitioners have provided no information showing that stainless steel plate production, or any part of its production process, does not come under Attachment 1 of the ECSC treaty. Other sections of Law 357/91 state that eligible firms must be small- or medium-sized with a maximum number of employees of 250—a number that is far less than the 3,600 employees of the Italian producer (see p. 5, Exhibit D, April 15, 1998, submission by petitioners). In addition, Article 1, par. 1 of Law 357/91 states that eligible grants are to cover costs "as long as these costs are not related to iron and steel industries." Contrary to petitioners' assertions that some benefits (e.g., interest subsidies under Article 6) may have different eligibility requirements, information on the record indicates that the requirements

described above apply to all benefits. Based on the foregoing, we are not including Law 357/91 benefits in our investigation.

2. *Law 481/94 Funds for Capacity Reduction in the Metals Industry.* In their submission of April 17, 1998, petitioners withdrew their allegation that AST may have benefitted from assistance under Law 481/94 stating, "it now appears that AST's production of subject merchandise did not benefit from this program."

3. *Law 223/91 Benefits for Early Retirement.* In the *Final Affirmative Countervailing Duty Determination: Grain-Oriented Electrical Steel From Italy*, 59 FR 18357 (April 18, 1994), the Department determined that benefits provided under Law 223/91, were not countervailable. Petitioners have not provided any new information which warrants a reexamination of that determination. Thus, we are not including this program in our investigation.

#### C. Republic of Korea

We are including in our investigation the following programs alleged in the petition to have provided subsidies to producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Korea:

1. *Pre-1992 Government of Korea Direction of Credit*
2. *Post-1992 Government of Korea Direction of Credit*
3. *Tax Incentives for Highly-Advanced Technology Businesses*
4. *Provision of Electricity at Less Than Adequate Remuneration*
5. *Reserve for Investment*
6. *Export Facility Loans*
7. *Reserve for Export Loss Under the Tax Exemption and Reduction Control Act (TERCL)*
8. *Reserve for Overseas Market Development Under the Tax Exemption and Reduction Control Act (TERCL)*
9. *Unlimited Deduction of Overseas Entertainment Expenses*
10. *Short-Term Export Financing*
11. *Korean Export-Import Bank (EXIMBANK) Loans*
12. *Export Insurance Rates Provided by the Korean Export Insurance Corporation*
13. *Excessive Duty Drawback*
14. *Kwangyang Bay Project*

We are not including in our investigation the following program alleged to be benefitting producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in Korea:

##### Special Depreciation of Assets

Petitioners allege that this program is contingent upon exports. In support of

their allegation, petitioners submitted a copy of Pohang Iron & Steel Company's (POSCO) (a named producer/exporter of the subject merchandise) 1993 Annual Report. Because POSCO's 1993 Annual Report documents a line item for "special depreciation of assets," petitioners assert that POSCO may have benefitted from this "export-oriented" subsidy program. However, the relevant note in POSCO's 1993 Annual Report states that the special depreciation is for "facilities and equipment which operate longer than a standard eight-hour work day." The note further indicates that the "special depreciation will no longer be allowed for financial reporting purposes, commencing in 1994." Therefore, it does not appear that the special depreciation is contingent on exportation. Moreover, petitioners have not provided any evidence indicating POSCO received the special depreciation after 1993. Therefore, we are not including this program in our investigation.

#### D. Republic of South Africa

We are including in our investigation the following programs alleged in the petition to have provided subsidies to producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in South Africa:

1. *IDC Capital Infusions in Columbus Stainless Steel Co., Ltd.*
2. *Tax Benefits Under Section 37E of the Income Tax Act*
3. *Export Assistance Under the Export Marketing Assistance and the Export Marketing and Investment Assistance Programs*
4. *Regional Industrial Development Program (RIDP)*
5. *Competitiveness Fund*
6. *Low Interest Rate Finance for the Promotion of Exports (LIFE) Scheme*
7. *Low Interest Rate Scheme for the Promotion of Exports*
8. *Import Financing through Impofin, Ltd.*

We are not including in our investigation the following programs alleged to be benefitting producers and exporters of the subject merchandise in South Africa:

1. *Export finance guarantee program.* According to a paper provided in the petition, published by the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Ltd. (IDC) and entitled *Measures and Policies Impacting on South African Industry*, this program is designed to help small- and medium-sized businesses which need financial assistance to execute export orders. In light of information in the petition indicating that stainless steel producers are large enterprises, petitioners have not provided any information to show

that the producers/exporters of the subject merchandise would be eligible for this program. On this basis, we are not including this program in our investigation.

2. *Export marketing allowance.* The Department examined this program in the 1991 administrative review of the countervailing duty order on ferrochrome from South Africa (as Category D of the Export Incentive Program). See *Ferrochrome from South Africa; Final Results of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review*, 60 FR 7043 (February 6, 1995); *Ferrochrome from South Africa; Preliminary Results of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review*, 58 FR 59988 (November 12, 1993). In that review, the Department found that companies could deduct from taxable income marketing expenses incurred until March 31, 1992, the date the program was terminated. The petition contains no evidence that the program has been reinstated and provides no reason to believe that any benefits obtained prior to March 31, 1992, could remain outstanding through 1997, the period of investigation. On this basis, we are not including this program in our investigation.

3. *Export credit insurance.* Petitioners have provided information indicating the existence of an insurance program for the coverage of exporters' risk of losses resulting from failure to receive payments. The program is administered by the Credit Guarantee Insurance Corporation of South Africa Limited (CGIC) on behalf of the Department Trade and Industry (DTI). Petitioners have not provided any information indicating that the CGIC's premiums are inadequate to cover the long-term operating costs of the program. Therefore, we are not including this program in our investigation.

4. *Multi-shift scheme.* According to IDC and DTI publications provided in the petition, this scheme makes available low interest financing to fund the increase in working capital which becomes necessary as a result of adding a production shift. Petitioners allege that this program may be contingent upon exportation. However, the descriptions of the Multi-Shift Scheme itself do not indicate that the scheme is contingent in any way upon exportation. In addition, petitioners have not provided any information indicating that this scheme may be otherwise limited to a specific enterprise or industry, or group thereof. On this basis, we are not including this program in our investigation.

5. *Low interest rates for the promotion of employment scheme.* According to an IDC publication provided in the

petition, this scheme makes available low interest financing to help companies add production capacity that will increase employment opportunities. Petitioners allege that this program may be contingent upon exportation. The description of this scheme itself does not indicate that this scheme is contingent in any way upon exportation. In addition, petitioners have not provided any information indicating that this scheme may be otherwise limited to a specific enterprise or industry, or group thereof. On this basis, we are not including this program in our investigation.

6. *Manufacturing development program (MDP).* According to information provided in the petition (an IDC paper titled *Measures and Policies Impacting on South African Industry*), the MDP provides for "an accelerated depreciation allowance for the expansion or establishment of small, medium and large enterprises \* \* \* on plant and equipment brought into use between July 1, 1996, and September 30, 1999." The description of the program itself does not indicate that the MDP is contingent in any way upon exportation. In addition, petitioners have not provided any information indicating that this program may be otherwise limited to a specific enterprise or industry, or group thereof. Thus, we are not including this program in our investigation.

7. *Reduced rail rates.* Petitioners provided a 1994 Price Waterhouse publication entitled *Doing Business in South Africa* which indicates that the Railway Administration may, under certain circumstances, provide reduced rail rates on commodities destined for overseas. In the 1982 certain steel investigation from South Africa, the Department found that countervailable benefits due to reduced rail rates to exporters had ceased, effective April 1, 1982. See *Final Affirmative Countervailing Duty Determination and Countervailing Duty Orders; Certain Steel Products From South Africa*, 47 FR 39379, 39380 (September 7, 1982). In the 1993 certain steel investigation from South Africa, the Department did not initiate an investigation of the rail rates in South Africa. See *Initiation of Countervailing Duty Investigation: Certain Carbon Steel Flat Products From South Africa*, 58 FR 32515 (June 10, 1993) (1993 Initiation). The information examined in that investigation is the same type of information submitted in this petition, and petitioners have not provided any additional information that would warrant a reconsideration of the Department's previous decisions.

Thus, we are not including this program in our investigation.

8. *Reduced electricity rates.* Petitioners provided a 1994 Price Waterhouse publication entitled *Doing Business in South Africa* which indicates that companies in energy-intensive industries may negotiate special tariffs with the relevant authority and/or the Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM), a state enterprise. In the 1993 investigation of certain steel products from South Africa, petitioners also alleged that steel producers in South Africa may benefit from special electricity rates that can be negotiated with ESKOM, but the Department did not initiate an investigation of electricity rates. See *1993 Initiation*, 58 FR 32515. The statement from in Price Waterhouse publication contains no new information or evidence of changed circumstances which would warrant a reexamination of electricity rates in South Africa. Thus, we are not including this program in our investigation.

9. *World-Player Scheme.* According to IDC publications provided in the petition, this scheme makes low-interest financing available to manufacturers for the acquisition of fixed assets (machinery and equipment) in order to improve their competitiveness following changes in the tariff protection policy. The description of the World-Player Scheme itself does not indicate that the scheme is designed to promote exports; rather, it indicates that its focus is to assist companies competing with imports. In addition, although the IDC publications indicate that the scheme is available to manufactures whose total nominal import tariff rates have decreased by ten percentage points, petitioners have not provided information indicating that changes in tariffs rates are limited to a specific enterprise or industry, or group thereof.

#### Distribution of Copies of the Petition

In accordance with section 702(b)(4)(A)(i) of the Act, copies of the public version of the petition have been provided to the representatives of Belgium, Italy, Korea, and South Africa. We will attempt to provide copies of the public version of the petition to all the exporters named in the petition, as provided for under section 351.203(c)(2) of the Department's regulations.

#### ITC Notification

Pursuant to section 702(d) of the Act, we have notified the ITC of these initiations.

#### Preliminary Determination by the ITC

The ITC will determine by May 15, 1998, whether there is a reasonable indication that an industry in the United States is materially injured, or is threatened with material injury, by reason of imports of stainless steel plate in coils from Belgium, Italy, the Republic of Korea, and the Republic of South Africa. A negative ITC determination will, for any country, result in the investigation being terminated with respect to that country; otherwise, the investigations will proceed according to statutory and regulatory time limits.

This notice is published pursuant to section 777(i) of the Act.

Dated: April 20, 1998.

**Robert S. LaRussa,**

*Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.*

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 042098B]

##### Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permit (PHF# 898-1451)

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Attractions Hawaii, P.O. Box 1060, Pacific Davies Center, Honolulu, Hawaii 96808, has applied in due form for a permit to take Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*) for purposes of scientific research and enhancement.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before May 28, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 713-2289;

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (562) 980-4001; and

Protected Species Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area Office, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 9682-2396 (808) 973-2987.

Written data or views, or requests for a public hearing on this request, should

be submitted to the Director, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jeannie Drevenak, (301) 713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR 222.23).

The application is for the permanent transfer of five (5) currently captive, unreleasable adult Hawaiian monk seals to Sea Life Park Hawaii for research and enhancement purposes. The primary objective of the proposed activity is to make the seals available for scientific research on an opportunistic basis in order to benefit the wild population of Hawaiian monk seals. A secondary objective is to increase public awareness of the status of the Hawaiian monk seal through education efforts and by providing an opportunity to observe the species in captivity.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: April 22, 1998.

**Ann D. Terbush,**

*Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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