

Others (Including Non-Profit Organizations) With Credit Available Elsewhere: 7.125%.

For Economic Injury

Businesses and Small Agricultural Cooperatives Without Credit Available Elsewhere: 4.000%.

The number assigned to this disaster for physical damage is 309006 and for economic injury the number is 988800.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 59002 and 59008)

Dated: June 19, 1998.

Herbert L. Mitchell,

Acting Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

[FR Doc. 98-17708 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

[Declaration of Disaster #3089; Amendment #1]

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

In accordance with a notice from the Federal Emergency Management Agency dated June 16, 1998, the above-numbered Declaration is hereby amended to include Beaver, Pike, and Susquehanna Counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a disaster area due to damages caused by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding that occurred May 31 through June 2, 1998. In addition, applications for economic injury loans from small businesses located in the following contiguous counties may be filed until the specified date at the previously designated locations: Lawrence, Monroe, and Wayne Counties in Pennsylvania; Columbiana, County, Ohio; Hancock County, West Virginia; Warren and Sussex Counties in New Jersey; and Broome Orange, Sullivan, and Tioga Counties in New York.

Any counties contiguous to the above-name primary counties and not listed herein have been previously declared.

All other information remains the same, i.e., the deadline for filing applications for physical damage is August 7, 1998 and for economic injury the termination date is March 8, 1999.

The economic injury numbers are 990800 for Ohio; 990900 for West Virginia; 991000 for New Jersey; and 991100 for New York.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 59002 and 59008)

Dated: June 24, 1998.

Bernard Kulik,

Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

[FR Doc. 98-17709 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

[Declaration of Disaster #3078; Amendment #5]

State of Tennessee

In accordance with information received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the above-numbered Declaration is hereby amended to extend the deadline for filing applications for physical damages as a result of this disaster to July 19, 1998.

All other information remains the same, i.e., the deadline for filing applications for economic injury is January 20, 1999.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 59002 and 59008)

Dated: June 24, 1998.

Bernard Kulik,

Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

[FR Doc. 98-17713 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 2845]

The Bureau of Personnel, Recruitment Office; Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Department of State.

ACTION: 60-Day Notice of Proposed Information Collection; Application for Federal Employment (DS-1950).

SUMMARY: The Department of State is seeking Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for the information collection described below. The purpose of this notice is to allow 60 days for public comment in the **Federal Register** preceding submission to OMB. This process is conducted in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

The following summarizes the information collection proposal submitted to OMB:

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Originating Office: Bureau of Personnel, Recruitment Office.

Title of Information Collection: Application for Federal Employment.

Frequency: Yearly.

Form Number: DS-1950.

Respondents: Used by individuals to apply for certain excepted positions at the Department of State.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25,000.

Average Hours Per Response: 30 minutes.

Total Estimated Burden: 12,500 hours.

Public comments are being solicited to permit the agency to—

- Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the agency functions.

- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection.

- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.

- Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Comments regarding the collection listed in this notice or requests for copies of the proposed collection and supporting documents should be directed to Charles S. Cunningham, Directives Management Branch, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520, (202) 647-0596.

Dated: June 18, 1998.

Fernando Burbano,

Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-17740 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-15-M

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Free Area Trade of the Americas

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice of initiation of Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations; request for public comment on initial U.S. objectives for the nine negotiating groups.

SUMMARY: The Trade Staff Committee (TPSC) is providing notice of the United States' participation in trade negotiations with the 33 countries in the Western Hemisphere participating in the Summit of the Americas¹ and of the

¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and

principles and objectives for the negotiations to which the 34 countries have agreed. The TPSC invites public comment on initial U.S. objectives for each of the nine FTAA negotiating groups.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For procedural questions concerning public comments contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, (202) 395-3475. All questions concerning the negotiations should be directed to Karen M. Lezny, Director for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Office of the Western Hemisphere, Office of the United States Trade Representative, (202) 395-5190.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 11, 1994, President Clinton and the 33 other democratically-elected leaders in the Western Hemisphere met in Miami, Florida for the first Summit of the Americas. They agreed to conclude negotiations on a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by the year 2005, and to achieve concrete progress toward that objective by the end of the century. The 34 leaders agreed to negotiate a balanced and comprehensive agreement covering the following areas, among others: tariffs and non-tariff barriers affecting trade in goods and services; agriculture; subsidies; investment; intellectual property rights; government procurement; technical barriers to trade; safeguards; rules of origin; antidumping and countervailing duties; sanitary and phytosanitary standards and procedures; dispute resolution; and competition policy. The 34 Western Hemisphere ministers responsible for trade met four times; in June 1995 in Denver, Colorado; in March 1996 in Cartagena, Colombia; in May 1997 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil; and, in March 1998 in San Jose, Costa Rica, in order to prepare for the negotiation of the FTAA Agreement. The trade ministers created 11 working groups that collected and analyzed information on existing trade-related measures in each area to assist them in their preparations.

At the San Jose meeting in March 1998, the trade ministers recommended that the Western Hemisphere leaders initiate the negotiations and provided them recommendations on the structure, objectives, principles, and venues of the negotiations. The trade ministers reaffirmed the principles and objectives that have guided work on the FTAA since Miami, including that the

agreement will be balanced, comprehensive, and WTO-consistent. They also reaffirmed that the agreement will constitute a single undertaking; will take into account the needs, economic conditions and opportunities of the smaller economies; and, will not raise additional barriers to the trade of other countries. The ministers pledged to continue to avoid to the greatest extent possible the adoption of policies that adversely affect trade in the hemisphere. They also reiterated that the negotiation of the FTAA will take into account the broad social and economic agenda contained in the Miami Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action with a view to contributing to raising living standards, to improving the working conditions of all people in the Americas and to better protecting the environment.

On April 18-19, 1998, President Clinton and his 33 counterparts in the Western Hemisphere initiated the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations at the Summit of the Americas meeting in Santiago, Chile. The leaders agreed to the general framework proposed by the 34 trade ministers, which include the establishment initially of nine negotiating groups to be guided by general principles and objectives and specified objectives as agreed by the ministers in March 1998. The leaders also agreed to the establishment of a Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) composed of the 34 vice ministers responsible for trade to oversee the negotiation. The TNC held its first meeting on June 17-19 in Buenos Aires. Three other entities also were established: a Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society, a joint public-private sector Experts Committee on Electronic Commerce, and a Consultative Group on Smaller Economies.

The nine negotiating groups are for: Market Access;² Agriculture; Investment; Services; Government Procurement; Dispute Settlement; Intellectual Property Rights; Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties; and Competition Policy. They will begin their work no later than September 30, 1998 and will meet in

² The market access negotiating group will cover tariffs, non-tariff measures, standards and technical barriers to trade (for both agricultural and industrial products), customs procedures (for both agricultural and industrial products), rules of origin (for both agricultural and industrial products), and safeguards (for both agricultural and industrial products). The agriculture negotiating group will cover tariff, non-tariff measures, sanitary and phytosanitary measure (for both agricultural and industrial products), and export subsidies and other trade-distorting practices affecting agricultural products in the Hemisphere.

Miami, Florida. The negotiating groups will be guided in their work by the general principles and objectives as well as the specific objectives agreed by the ministers, as set out in Annex I and Annex II of the San Jose Declaration, reproduced below.

The establishment of nine negotiating groups is an initial structure for the negotiations. This structure is flexible and is expected to be modified over time as required to assist the negotiations.

Since the Santiago Summit, USTR has held informal consultations with various sectors of civil society, including consumer, labor, business and environmental interests, which have expressed views and an interest in commenting on U.S. positions and objectives for the nine negotiating groups.

Public Comments

To prepare for the initial meetings of the nine negotiating groups starting in September 1998, the TPSC invites written comment on what should be the U.S. positions and objectives with respect to each of the negotiating groups. U.S. negotiators seek input beyond the general principles and objectives and specific objectives agreed to in San Jose by the United States as one of the 34-countries.

USTR will seek additional public comment separately on other issues related to the FTAA, including the Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society and concerning the economic effects of the removal of duties and nontariff barriers to trade among FTAA participating countries.

Those persons wishing to submit written comments should provide twenty (20) typed copies (in English) no later than Wednesday, July 29, 1998, to Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Room 501, 600 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20508. Comments should state clearly the position taken and should describe the specific information supporting that position.

If the submission contains business confidential information, twenty copies of a non-confidential version must also be submitted. A justification as to why the information contained in the submission should be treated confidentially must be included in the submission. In addition, any submissions containing business confidential information must be clearly marked "Confidential" at the top and bottom of the cover page (or letter) and of each succeeding page of the

Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, United States, and Venezuela.

submission. The version that does not contain confidential information should also be clearly marked, at the top and bottom of each page, "public version" or "non-confidential."

Written comments submitted in connection with this request, except for information granted "business confidential" status pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.6, will be available for public inspection in the USTR Reading Room, Room 101, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. An appointment to review the file may be made by calling Brenda Webb (202) 395-6186. The Reading Room is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Frederick L. Montgomery,
Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

San Jose Declaration

Annex I—General Principles and Objectives

The negotiations for the construction of the FTAA will be guided by the following General Principles and Objectives:

General Principles

(a) Decisions in the FTAA negotiating process will be made by consensus.

(b) Negotiations will be conducted in a transparent manner to ensure mutual advantage and increased benefits to all participants of the FTAA.

(c) The FTAA Agreement will be consistent with the rules and disciplines of the WTO. With this purpose, the participating countries reiterate their commitment to multilateral rules and disciplines, in particular Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and its Uruguay Round Understanding, and Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

(d) The FTAA should improve upon WTO rules and disciplines wherever possible and appropriate, taking into account the full implications of the rights and obligations of countries as members of the WTO.

(e) The negotiations will begin simultaneously in all issue areas. The initiation, conduct and outcome of the negotiations of the FTAA shall be treated as parts of a single undertaking which will embody the rights and obligations as mutually agreed upon.

(f) The FTAA can co-exist with bilateral and sub-regional agreements, to the extent that the rights and obligations under these agreements are not covered by or go beyond the rights and obligations of the FTAA.

(g) Countries may negotiate and accept the obligations of the FTAA individually or as members of a sub-regional integration group negotiating as a unit.

(h) Special attention should be given to the needs, economic conditions (including transition costs and possible internal dislocations) and opportunities of smaller economies, to ensure their full participation in the FTAA process.

(i) The rights and obligations of the FTAA will be shared by all countries. In the negotiation of the various thematic areas, measures such as technical assistance in specific areas and longer periods for implementing the obligations could be included on a case by case basis, in order to facilitate the adjustment of smaller economies and the full participation of all countries in the FTAA.

(j) The measures agreed upon to facilitate the integration of smaller economies in the FTAA process shall be transparent, simple and easily applicable, recognizing the degree of heterogeneity among them.

(k) All countries shall ensure that their laws, regulations and administrative procedures conform to their obligations under the FTAA agreement.

(l) In order to ensure the full participation of all countries in the FTAA, the differences in their level of development should be taken into account.

General Objectives

(a) To promote prosperity through increased economic integration and free trade among the countries of our Hemisphere, which are key factors for raising standards of living, improving the working conditions of people in the Americas and better protecting the environment.

(b) To establish a Free Trade Area, in which barriers to trade in goods and services and investment will be progressively eliminated, concluding negotiations no later than 2005 and achieving concrete progress toward the attainment of this objective by the end of this century.

(c) To maximize market openness through high levels of disciplines through a balanced and comprehensive agreement.

(d) To provide opportunities to facilitate the integration of the smaller economies in the FTAA process in order to realize their opportunities and increase their level of development.

(e) To strive to make our trade liberalization and environmental policies mutually supportive, taking into account work undertaken by the WTO and other international organizations.

(f) To further secure, in accordance with our respective laws and regulations, the observance and promotion of worker rights, renewing our commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labor standards and acknowledging that the International Labor Organization is the competent body to set and deal with those core labor standards.

Annex II—Objectives by Issue Area

We have agreed that the negotiations for the construction of the FTAA, in the different issue area, will be guided by the following objectives:

Market Access

(a) Consistent with the provisions of the WTO, including article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1994) and its Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, to progressively eliminate, tariffs, and non tariff barriers, as well as other measures with equivalent

effects, which restrict trade between participating countries.

(b) All tariffs will be subject to negotiation.

(c) Different trade liberalization timetables may be negotiated.

(d) To facilitate the integration of smaller economies and their full participation in the FTAA negotiations.

Agriculture

(a) The objectives of the negotiating group on Market Access shall apply to trade in agricultural products. Rules of origin, customs procedures and Technical Barriers to Trade issues will be addressed in the Market Access negotiating group.

(b) To ensure that sanitary and phytosanitary measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries or a disguised restriction to international trade, in order to prevent protectionist trade practices and facilitate trade in the hemisphere. Consistent with the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), said measures will only be applied to achieve the appropriate level of protection for human, animal or plant life or health, will be based on scientific principles, and will not be maintained without sufficient scientific evidence.

Negotiations in this area involve identifying and developing measures needed to facilitate trade, following and examining in depth the provisions set down in the WTO/SPS Agreement.

(c) To eliminate agricultural export subsidies affecting trade in the Hemisphere.

(d) To identify other trade-distorting practices for agricultural products, including those that have an effect equivalent to agriculture export subsidies, and bring them under greater discipline.

(e) Agricultural products covered are the goods referred to in Annex I of the WTO Agriculture Agreement.

(f) Incorporate progress made in the multilateral negotiations on agriculture to be held according to Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture, as well as the results of the review of the SPS Agreement.

Rules of Origin

(a) To develop an efficient and transparent system of rules of origin, including nomenclature and certificates of origin, in order to facilitate the exchange of goods, without creating unnecessary obstacles to trade.

Customs Procedures

(a) To simplify customs procedures, in order to facilitate trade and reduce administrative costs.

(b) To create and implement mechanisms to exchange information in customs issues among FTAA countries.

(c) To design effective systems to detect and combat fraud and other illicit customs activities, without creating unnecessary obstacles to foreign trade.

(d) To promote customs mechanisms and measures that ensure operations be conducted with transparency, efficiency, integrity and responsibility.

Investment

(a) To establish a fair and transparent legal framework to promote investment through the creation of a stable and predictable environment that protects the investor, his investment and related flows, without creating obstacles to investments from outside the hemisphere.

Standards and Technical Barriers to Trade

(a) To eliminate and prevent unnecessary technical barriers to trade in the FTAA, based on the proposals contained in the Common Objectives Paper approved by the Working Group.

Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties

(a) To examine ways to deepen, if appropriate, existing disciplines provided in the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and enhance compliance with the terms of the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

(b) To achieve a common understanding with a view to improving, where possible, the rules and procedures regarding the operation and application of trade remedy laws in order to not create unjustified barriers to trade in the Hemisphere.

Government Procurement

(a) The broad objective of negotiations in government procurement is to expand access to the government procurement markets of the FTAA countries.

More specifically, the objectives are:

(a) To achieve a normative framework that ensures openness and transparency of government procurement processes, without necessarily implying the establishment of identical government procurement systems in all countries;

(b) To ensure non-discrimination in government procurement within a scope to be negotiated;

(c) To ensure impartial and fair review for the resolution of procurement complaints and appeals by suppliers and the effective implementation of such resolutions.

Intellectual Property Rights

(a) To reduce distortions in trade in the Hemisphere and promote and ensure adequate and effective protection to intellectual property rights. Changes in technology must be considered.

Services

(a) Establish disciplines to progressively liberalize trade in services, so as to permit the achievement of a hemispheric free trade area under conditions of certainty and transparency;

(b) Ensure the integration of smaller economies into the FTAA process.

Competition Policy

The objectives of the negotiations are:

(a) General Objectives:

- To guarantee that the benefits of the FTAA liberalization process not be undermined by anti-competitive business practices.

(b) Specific Objectives:

- To advance towards the establishment of juridical and institutional coverage at the national, sub-regional or regional level, that proscribes the carrying out of anti-competitive business practices;

- To develop mechanisms that facilitate and promote the development of competition policy and guarantee the enforcement of regulations on free competition among and within countries of the Hemisphere.

Dispute Settlement

(a) To establish a fair, transparent and effective mechanism for dispute settlement among FTAA countries, taking into account *inter alia* the WTO Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes.

(b) To design ways to facilitate and promote the use of arbitration and other alternative dispute settlement mechanisms, to solve private trade controversies in the framework of the FTAA.

Work in different groups may be interrelated, such as agriculture and market access; services and investment; competition policy and subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties; among others. The TNC shall identify linkages and outline appropriate procedures to ensure timely and effective coordination. We agree to give the mandate to the relevant negotiating groups to study issues relating to: the interaction between trade and competition policy, including antidumping measures; market access and agriculture, in order to identify any areas that may merit further consideration by us. The groups involved will report their results to the TNC no later than December 2000. This is without prejudice to decisions made by the TNC to dissolve, establish or merge groups. Likewise, the negotiating groups may establish ad-hoc working groups.

[FR Doc. 98-17723 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3190-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Office of the Secretary****Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review**

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected burden. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on March 30, 1998 [63 FR 15257].

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before August 5, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Paul Scott, Office Engineering, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, HNG-10, Room 3134, 400 7th St., SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, telephone (202) 366-4104. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., E.T., Monday thru Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

1. *Title:* Develop and Submit Utility Accommodation Policies.

OMB Number: 2125-0514.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Form(s): N/A.

Affected Public: State highway agencies.

Abstract: The FHWA has elected to fulfill its statutory obligations regarding utility accommodation by requiring the State highway agencies to develop and submit to FHWA a policy statement on the authority of utilities to use and occupy highway rights-of-way; the State's authority to regulate such use; and the policies and/or procedures employed for accommodating utilities within the rights-of-way of Federal-aid highway projects. Upon approval of the policy statement, the State highway agency may take any action required in accordance with the approved policy statement without case-by-case review by the FHWA. Utility accommodation policy statements have previously been approved by the FHWA for all the 50 State highway agencies and the highway agencies of the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Even so, these policy statements must periodically be reviewed to see if updating is necessary, and must periodically be updated to reflect policy changes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: The estimated total annual reporting burden is 2,800 hours.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725-17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503, Attention FHWA Desk Officer.

Comments are invited on: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and