

making the required certifications were published in the **Federal Register** on April 19, 1996 (61 FR 17342).

The Department did not previously certify Venezuela and Nigeria because the governments of those countries had not demonstrated that their respective sea turtle protection programs were comparable to that of the United States, or that their specific fishing environments did not pose a threat to sea turtles. Although both governments have adopted programs comparable to the U.S. program, requiring shrimp trawl vessels to use seat turtle excluder devices, initial evidence this year indicated that neither government was enforcing its program sufficiently to warrant certification. However, in both cases, more recent evidence demonstrates that each government has taken the necessary steps to improve enforcement of its program. Accordingly, the Department of State hereby certifies Venezuela and Nigeria pursuant to Section 609(b)(2)(A) and (B).

As with the other countries currently certified, the Department of State will remain in close contact with the governments of Venezuela and Nigeria in order to ensure that their shrimp harvesting methods do not threaten sea turtles.

Dated: August 10, 1998.

**R. Tucker Scully,**

*Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Space.*

[FR Doc. 98-22306 Filed 8-18-98; 8:45 am]

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## TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

### Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as Amended by Pub. L. 104-13; Proposed Collection, Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Tennessee Valley Authority.

**ACTION:** Proposed Collection; comment request.

**SUMMARY:** The proposed information collection described below will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended). The Tennessee Valley Authority is soliciting public comments on this proposed collection as provided by 5 CFR Section 1320.8(d)(1). Requests for information, including copies of the information collection proposed and supporting documentation, should be directed to the Agency Clearance Officer: Wilma H. McCauley, Tennessee Valley Authority, 1101 Market Street (WR 4Q), Chattanooga, Tennessee

37402-2801; (423) 751-2523. Comments should be sent to the Agency Clearance Officer no later than October 19, 1998.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Type of Request:* Regular submission.

*Title of Information Collection:*

Economic Assessment of Waterway Docks and Terminals in the Tennessee Valley and Parts of the Surrounding National Inland Waterway Network.

*Frequency of Use:* Occasional.

*Type of Affected Public:* Federal, State and Local Governments, and Private Industry.

*Small Businesses or Organizations*

*Affected:* Yes.

*Federal Budget Functional Category Code:* 450.

*Estimated Number of Annual Responses:* 1700.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 3400 hours.

*Estimated Average Burden Hours Per Response:* 2 hours.

*Need For and Use of Information:* The information collection is necessary to assess the service capability of waterway docks and terminals located in the Tennessee Valley and surrounding States. The data will be used to help potential industrial clients with decisions regarding transportation information and the handling capabilities of waterway facilities located on various river segments. This is vital information for industry when deciding where the most economical location is for a new plant site or project. In addition the data collection surrounding the waterway terminals located on the Tennessee River is necessary for use in updating TVA's river performance indicator.

**William S. Moore,**

*Senior Manager, Administrative Services.*

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## OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

### Solicitation of Public Comment Regarding U.S. Preparations for the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Meeting, Fourth Quarter 1999

**SUMMARY:** The Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is providing notice of the U.S. intention to develop proposals and positions concerning the agenda of the third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The TWO General Council has been instructed to prepare recommendations regarding the launch of further trade negotiations and work in the WTO, which will be considered and approved

by WTO Members meeting at their next Ministerial to be held in the United States during the fourth quarter of 1999. The TPSC invites public comment regarding the development of the agenda, scope, content and timetables for negotiations or further work in the WTO, including additional consultations with non-governmental stakeholders. The Administration seeks views on the broadcast possible range of issues for considerations, including possible subject matter and approaches to any new negotiations or future work in the WTO. The deadline for written comments is Friday, October 16, 1998.

The General Council's instructions are contained in WTO Ministerial Declarations WT/MIN(98)/DEC/1 and DEC/2 agreed on May 20, 1998, at the WTO's second ministerial meeting. In September 1998, the General Council will begin holding special sessions to prepare recommendations. Recommendations will be developed on the basis of consensus of WTO Members. The General Council is expected to review issues, at least initially, in the order presented in WT/MIN(98)/DEC/1, as well as to review the results of work carried out in accordance with WT/MIN(98)/DEC/2. This solicitation is intended to facilitate the Administration's participation in the General Council's consideration of issues, preparation of U.S. proposals and positions regarding eventual recommendations, and acceptance of such proposals by consensus of WTO Members.

**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. General inquiries should be made to the Office of WTO and Multilateral Affairs at (202) 395-6843; calls on individual subjects will be transferred within USTR as appropriate. Information about the WTO can be obtained via the Internet on [www.ustr.gov](http://www.ustr.gov), or the WTO website ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)). Attention is drawn, in particular, to the Ministerial Declarations (WT/Min(98)/DEC/1 and DEC/2 of May 20, 1998 regarding preparation of the WTO's forward agenda and electronic commerce) and the Ministerial Declaration resulting from the WTO's first ministerial meeting held in Singapore in December, 1996 (WT/Min(96)/DEC), which are available on the USTR and WTO websites. In addition, a detailed review of the WTO Agreements, the work of the various WTO committees and bodies and the WTO "built-in agenda" are contained in

the "1998 Trade Policy Agenda and 1997 Annual Report of the President on the Trade Agreements Program," also available on the USTR website. On May 26, 1998, the TPSC published a notice in the **Federal Register** requesting public comments with respect to the review of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 18–20, the World Trade Organization (WTO) held its second ministerial conference in Geneva, Switzerland, along with a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the post-World War II multilateral trading system. President Clinton and 13 other heads of state or government addressed the gathering, and WTO Members accepted the U.S. invitation to host the third ministerial conference in late 1999. The general Ministerial Declaration, agreed on May 20, 1998, instructs the WTO's General Council to begin preparation for the launch of negotiations and consideration of the WTO's forward agenda for approval at its 1999 ministerial meeting. A second Declaration, also agreed on May 20, 1998, commits Members to not impose customs duties on electronic transmissions and calls for the establishment by the General Council of a work program in the WTO on the trade-related aspects of electronic commerce.

These processes will start officially at a special meeting of the General Council on September 24, 1998. By prior agreement, the post-1999 negotiating agenda will, at a minimum, encompass those broad-ranging and substantial area where existing WTO Agreements now call for further negotiations and deliberization, such as in agriculture, services and intellectual property. However, without prejudice to the initiation of negotiations on the above topics already called for the WTO's "build-in agenda," the preparatory process will also examine whether other topics may be ripe for negotiations or further study. This is consistent with U.S. calls for flexibility and creativity in structuring the WTO's future work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the future agenda, pursuant to the Declaration, the Council is to make\* \* \*(a) recommendations concerning: (i) the issues, including those brought forward by Members, relating to implementation of existing agreements and decisions; (ii) the negotiations already mandated at Marrakesh, to ensure that such negotiations begin on schedule; (iii) future work already provided for under other existing agreements and decisions taken at Marrakesh; (b) recommendations concerning other possible future work on the basis of the work programme initiated at Singapore; (c) recommendations on the follow-up to the High-Level Meeting on Least-Developed Countries; (d) recommendations arising from

Consideration will be given to various options for structuring the negotiations and work program, including timetables for any negotiations, as well as more effective means of engaging the wide range of non-governmental stakeholders in the preparation of the agenda and subsequent negotiations.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS REQUESTED:** To prepare for U.S. participation in the General Council meetings, the TPSC invites written comments on U.S. objectives with respect to the various categories of issues identified in the two Declarations mentioned above, including the agenda, scope, content and timetables for work and negotiations. Comments submitted should clearly indicate the category or categories of issues outlined in the submission. USTR will seek additional public comment later in the year on details of certain agenda items (e.g., market access and agriculture, involving product-specific concerns). For purposes of this notice, comments should address the following issue areas:

#### **I. Implementation of Existing Agreements and Work Programs**

Comments are requested with respect to experience in implementation, including where the Agreements have been successful in addressing U.S. interests, and in areas where changes would facilitate better enforcement and adherence to rules and commitments, or otherwise advance U.S. policy objectives. Particular attention is drawn to the various rule encompassed in the GATT 1994 (all GATT Articles), the Marrakesh Protocol to the General Agreement, the Agreements on Agriculture, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Textiles and Clothing, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Antidumping Practices, Customs Valuation, Preshipment Inspection, Import Licensing, Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, Agreement on Safeguards, General Agreement on Trade in Services, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the Understanding on the Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes, Trade Policy Review Mechanism and Ministerial Decisions and Declarations, including those undertaken at Marrakesh.

#### **II. Mandated Negotiations**

Comments are requested regarding U.S. priorities for the Agreements

consideration of other matters proposed and agreed to by Members concerning their multilateral trade relations\* \* \*."

concluded as part of the Uruguay Round that contain express agreement to conduct further negotiations. The Agreement on Agriculture contains provisions for further negotiations and identifies issues for consideration, including market access, domestic support and export subsidies. The General Agreement on Trade in Services provides for further negotiations on specific commitments to liberalize trade in services. The Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) provides for negotiations in certain areas. For all of these mandated negotiations, particular attention should be given to the range of additional issues not mentioned in the Agreements that should be considered, and the modalities for conducting further negotiations.

#### **III. Reviews of Existing Agreements and Work Programs**

Comments are requested regarding U.S. priorities pursuant to the Agreements from the Uruguay Round that specifically provide for reviews and other work as part of their individual work programs: Agriculture, Antidumping, Customs Valuation, Dispute Settlement Understanding, Import Licensing, Preshipment Inspection, Rules of Origin, Trade and the Environment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Safeguards, Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Textiles and Clothing, Trade Policy Review Mechanism, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), and the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, for example, contain review provisions as a first step in taking further decisions with respect to the Agreements. Particular attention should be given to the improvements, if any, that might be sought as a result of the reviews or conclusions of the work programs.

#### **IV. Singapore Ministerial Work Program**

Comments are requested on what, if any, next steps should be taken with respect to the issues raised in the context of the work of the working groups established on trade and investment, trade and competition policy, transparency in government procurement and the exploratory work undertaken by the WTO regarding trade facilitation. Particularly relevant are next steps in the above-mentioned areas, including the nature and scope of any

future work. In the case of procurement, these has already been agreement to identify the elements for a multilateral transparency agreement. With respect to the work on investment and competition, attention is drawn to the fact the both working groups are to complete reports to the General Council before the end of 1998.

#### **V. Integration of Least-Developed Countries**

Comments are requested on ways to facilitate the participation of least developed countries in the WTO, taking into account work that has been conducted to integrate the technical assistance provided by various international organizations, including the WTO. Areas for comment could include provision of additional capacity building and market access opportunities, and the possible graduation of countries from preferences.

#### **VI. Other Trade Matters of Interest**

Consistent with the Ministerial Declaration, comments are also solicited with respect to the range of issues where the United States might choose to seek, or be asked to join a consensus, to add additional items to the WTO's post-1999 agenda for negotiations or further work. The Administration is interested in considering the broadest range of issues as the agenda for the next century is developed. The issues identified thus far include:

(a) *Industrial market access:* comments are requested with respect to the overall desirability of conducting further tariff negotiations and possible modalities for such negotiations (e.g., pursuit of additional sectoral initiatives to reduce or harmonize duties, the application of formula or request/offer approaches and related issues). It should be noted that further negotiations on market access are already envisioned for products covered by the Agricultural Agreement.

(b) *Consultations with Non-Governmental Stakeholders:* comments are requested as to possible approaches that the WTO could undertake. In his speech to the WTO, President Clinton challenged the WTO to consider improving the opportunities for the public to participate in the development of the WTO's forward agenda, and to develop a more regular mechanism for consultation. The WTO has begun to take steps to broaden the interaction with non-governmental organizations in this regard, including the dissemination of information received from such organizations to the WTO's membership. Similarly, a number of

steps have been taken by the United States to promote greater transparency in the operation of the WTO that would be of benefit to stakeholders (e.g., with respect to making WTO documents more available to the public).

(c) *Relationship Between Trade and Labor:* comments are requested regarding various approaches to be considered in developing a consensus for further consideration of this issue on the WTO's forward agenda. WTO Ministers at Singapore renewed their commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labor standards, noting that economic growth and development fostered by increased trade and further trade liberalization contribute to the promotion of core labor standards. At the same time, they recognized the important role of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in this area and rejected the use of labor standards for protectionist purposes, and agreed that the comparative advantages of countries, particularly low-wage developing countries, must not be put into question. Attention is drawn to Section 131 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, addressing U.S. activity in the WTO in this area.

(d) *Institutional Issues:* comments are invited on the general institutional improvements that the United States should be contemplating for the WTO, particularly as its membership expands to nearly 160 early in the next century. Achieving greater transparency in the WTO's operation has already been identified as a priority issue for the Administration. The United States has consistently sought to expand the range of WTO documents available to the public, and is continuing to promote broader derestriction of documents in a more timely fashion, including in the area of access to dispute settlement panel reports. Similarly, as the membership expands to include Members with less experience operating as market economies, new challenges arise to the WTO's system of operations and its decision-making process. As a result of the Uruguay Round, the WTO entered into cooperation agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to ensure greater coherence in international economic policy; further cooperation may be desirable.

#### **VII. Electronic Commerce**

Consistent with the Declaration issued at the May 1998 WTO Ministerial Conference, comments are also solicited with respect to the commitment by WTO Members not to impose customs duties on electronic commerce and agreement to establish a work program

for further consideration of the relationship between trade and electronic commerce. The initial work program will be put in place by the General Council's special session in September 1998. The United States has proposed that the work program require the Councils on Goods, Services, and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property and the Committee on Trade and Development, and request the Committee on Government Procurement, to undertake work on electronic commerce. (The U.S. proposal is available in the "What's New" section of USTR's website, "www.ustr.gov.")

*Submission of Written Comments:* Those persons wishing to submit written comments should provide twenty (20) copies (in English) no later than October 16, 1998, to Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, Room 501, 600 17th Street Northwest, Washington, DC., 20508. Comments should state clearly the position taken and should describe the specific information supporting that information.

If the submission contains business confidential information, twenty copies of a confidential version, and twenty copies of a public version that does not contain confidential information, must 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 each succeeding page of the 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 Street, NW., Washington, DC. An appointment to review the file may be made by calling Brenda Webb at (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.  
[FR Doc. 98-22279 Filed 8-18-98; 8:45 am]

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