

in the offices of the Fund by 6 p.m. EST on the respective application due dates.

The Fund is extending the application deadlines for the CDFI Program Core and Intermediary Components because of unforeseeable delays in the printing of application forms and packets. The Fund has determined that potential applicants need more time between attending the various outreach workshops, receiving official versions of the CDFI Program application materials, and the due dates for those materials. So that potential applicants have sufficient time to complete their CDFI Program applications, the Fund is extending the application deadlines to ensure a minimum of eight weeks application preparation time from the date of availability of the application forms and packets.

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 4703, 4703 note, 4704, 4706, 4707, 4718; 12 CFR part 1805.

Dated: November 30, 1998.

Maurice A. Jones,

*Deputy Director for Policy and Programs,
Community Development Financial
Institutions Fund.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Customs Service

Renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences

AGENCY: Customs Service, Treasury.

ACTION: General notice.

SUMMARY: The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a renewable preferential trade program that allows the eligible products of designated developing countries to directly enter the United States free of duty. The GSP program expired on June 30, 1998, but has been renewed, effective October 21, 1998, with retroactive effect to July 1, 1998, by a provision in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Pub. L. 105-277. This document provides notice to importers that Customs will begin processing refunds on all duties paid, with interest from the date the duties were deposited, on GSP-eligible merchandise that was entered on July 1, 1998, through October 20, 1998, and that Customs will accept claims for GSP duty-free treatment for merchandise entered, or withdrawn from a warehouse, for consumption on or after October 21, 1998, through June 30, 1999, the provision's current sunset date.

DATES: Customs began the processing of refunds on duties paid—with interest as set forth in this document—on October 27, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general operational questions:

Formal entries—John Pierce, 202-927-1249

Informal entries—William Kotlowy, 202-927-1364

Mail entries—Robert Woods, 202-927-1236

Passenger Claims—Michael Perron, 202-927-1325

For specific questions relating to ABI processing: James Halpin, Office of Information and Technology, 202-927-7128.

Questions from filers regarding ABI transmissions should be directed to their ABI client representatives. Persons with other questions regarding this notice may contact John Pierce, Trade Agreements, 202-927-1249.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 501 of the Trade Act of 1974 (the 1974 Act), as amended (19 U.S.C. 2461), authorizes the President to establish a Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to provide duty-free treatment for eligible articles imported directly from designated beneficiary countries. Pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2465, as amended by section 981(a) of Pub. L. 105-34, 111 Stat. 902, duty-free treatment under the GSP program expired on June 30, 1998.

On October 21, 1998, the President signed into law the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Pub. L. 105-277. Section 1011 of the "Tax and Trade Relief Extension Act of 1998" (within Division J of that Appropriations Act) provides for the extension of GSP duty-free treatment to eligible articles from designated beneficiary countries that are entered, or withdrawn from a warehouse, for consumption on or after October 21, 1998, through June 30, 1999. Section 1011 also provides for the refund of any duty paid with respect to entries made after June 30, 1998, through October 20, 1998, to which duty-free treatment would have applied, provided that a request for liquidation or reliquidation is filed with Customs by April 19, 1999, (i.e., within 180 days after the date of enactment of the Appropriations Act) and contains sufficient information to enable Customs to locate the entry or to reconstruct the entry if it cannot be located.

Recognizing the impact that retroactive renewal and consequent

numerous reliquidations will have on both importers and Customs, Customs developed a mechanism to facilitate refunds (see, **Federal Register** Notice of June 16, 1998, 63 FR 32911) that began the processing of refunds on October 27, 1998. Customs expects the processing of refunds to take from four to eight weeks for certain formal Automated Broker Interface (ABI) entries. If refunds are not received within the specified time, importers are advised to direct inquiries regarding the status of their refunds to the appropriate Customs port of entry.

Duty-Free Entries

Effective October 21, 1998, filers again will be entitled to file GSP-eligible entries without the payment of estimated duties.

Refunds With Interest

A. Formal Entries

Customs will liquidate or reliquidate all affected entries and refund any duties deposited for items qualifying for GSP. Field locations shall not issue GSP refunds except as instructed to do so by Customs Headquarters.

If an ABI entry was filed with payment of estimated duties using the Special Program Indicator (SPI) for the GSP (the letter "A") as a prefix to the tariff number, no further action by the filer is required; filings with the SPI "A" will be treated as conforming requests for refunds.

Non-ABI filers who either did or did not request a refund by using the SPI "A" must request a refund in writing from the Port Director at the port of entry by April 19, 1999. The letter may cover either single entries or all entries filed by an individual filer at a single port. To expedite refunds, Customs recommends the following information be included in each letter:

1. A statement requesting a refund, as provided by section 1011 of the "Tax and Trade Relief Extension Act of 1998;"

2. The entry numbers and line items for which refunds are requested; and

3. The amount requested to be refunded for each line item and the total amount owed for all entries.

Interest on duties deposited will be paid, pursuant to section 505 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1505), based on the quarterly Internal Revenue Service interest rates used to calculate interest on refunds of Customs duties as follows:

July 1, 1998—July 31, 1998—7%

August 1, 1998—August 31, 1998—7%

September 1, 1998—September 30,

1998—7%

October 1, 1998—October 20, 1998—7%

B. Informal Entries

Refunds with interest on informal entries filed via ABI on a Customs Form 7501 with the SPI "A" will be processed in accordance with the procedures discussed above.

C. Mail Entries

The addressees must request a refund of GSP duties and return it, along with a copy of the CF 3419A, to the appropriate International Mail Branch (address listed on bottom right hand corner of CF 3419A). It is essential that a copy of the CF 3419A be included as this will be the only means of identifying whether GSP products have been entered and estimated duties and fees have been paid.

D. Baggage Declarations and Non-ABI Informal Refunds

If travelers/importers wrote a statement directly on their Customs declarations (CF 6059B) or informal entries (CF 363 or CF 7501) requesting a refund, no further action by the traveler/importer will be required; the statement will be treated as a conforming request for refunds. Failing to request a refund in this manner will not preclude a traveler/importer from otherwise making a timely request in writing, as described above for non-ABI filers.

Dated: November 24, 1998.

Peter J. Baish,

Acting Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**Customs Service**

Denial of Domestic Interested Party Petition; Petitioner's Desire to Contest Decision Concerning Tariff Classification of Textile Costumes

AGENCY: Customs Service, Department of the Treasury.

ACTION: Notice of petitioner's desire to contest decision on domestic interested party petition.

SUMMARY: In July 1997 a petition was filed by a domestic manufacturer of textile costumes regarding the tariff classification of imported textile costumes. The petition was filed pursuant to section 516, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended, seeking to have all textile costumes classified as wearing apparel in chapters 61 and 62 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS).

On July 22, 1998, Customs denied the Domestic Interested Party Petition and affirmed that the four textile costumes in question were classified as festive articles in subheading 9505.90.6090 (now 9505.90.6000), HTSUS, because they were found to be flimsy, nondurable, and not normal articles of wearing apparel. Pursuant to 19 CFR 175.24, Customs is now providing notice of this decision and also providing notice of the receipt of petitioner's desire to contest this decision.

DATES: December 4, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann Segura Minardi, Textiles Branch (202-927-1009).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background***Classification of Costumes*

Classification under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) is made in accordance with the General Rules of Interpretation (GRIs). GRI 1 provides that classification shall be determined according to the terms of the headings and any relative section or chapter notes. Merchandise that cannot be classified in accordance with GRI 1 is to be classified in accordance with subsequent GRIs taken in order. The Explanatory Notes (ENs) to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, which represent the official interpretation of the tariff at the international level, facilitate classification under the HTSUS by offering guidance in understanding the scope of the headings and GRIs.

Heading 9505, HTSUS, includes articles which are for "Festive, carnival, or other entertainment." However, Note 1(e), chapter 95, HTSUS, excludes articles of "fancy dress, of textiles, of chapter 61 or 62" from chapter 95. The ENs to 9505, state, among other things, that the heading covers:

(A) Festive, carnival or other entertainment articles, which in view of their intended use are generally made of non-durable material. They include:

* * * *

(3) Articles of fancy dress, e.g., masks, false ears and noses, wigs, false beards and moustaches (not being articles of postiche-heading 67.04), and paper hats. However, the heading excludes fancy dress of textile materials, of chapter 61 or 62.

On November 15, 1994, Customs issued HQ 957318, stating that it had determined to classify as festive articles in subheading 9505.90.6090, HTSUS, costumes of a flimsy nature and construction, lacking in durability, and

generally recognized as not being normal articles of apparel.

Filing of Domestic Interested Party Petition

On June 2, 1997, in response to the domestic manufacturer's request, Customs issued a decision, Headquarters Ruling (HQ) 959545, determining that four costume sets and their accessories would be classified under subheading 9505.90.6090, HTSUS, which provides for "Festive, carnival or other entertainment articles, including magic tricks and practical joke articles; parts and accessories thereof: Other: Other: Other" (effective August 1, 1997, the provision was amended and now reads as follows: 9505.90.6000, HTSUS, "Festive, carnival or other entertainment articles, including magic tricks and practical joke articles; parts and accessories thereof: Other: Other," which provides for duty-free entry under the general column one rate of duty).

In July 1997, and in accordance with the procedures of 19 U.S.C. 1516, and 19 CFR Part 175, a domestic interested party petition was filed on behalf of an American manufacturer of textile costumes. The petitioner contends that virtually identical costumes to those manufactured by petitioner are being imported into the United States and some of these textile costumes are being erroneously classified by Customs under subheading 9505.90.6090, HTSUS, as "Festive, carnival or other entertainment articles, including magic tricks and practical joke articles; parts and accessories thereof: Other: Other: Other." The provision is duty free under the general column one rate. The petitioner claims that all imported textile costumes should be classified as wearing apparel in chapters 61 or 62, HTSUS, and are therefore dutiable and may be subject to quota and visa restraints. Petitioner asserts that all textile costumes are excluded from classification under subheading 9505.90.6090, HTSUS, pursuant to Note 1(e), Chapter 95.

Notice of the domestic interested party petition was published in the **Federal Register** on December 22, 1997 (62 FR 66891). The notice invited written comments on the petition from interested parties. The comment period closed on February 20, 1998, and Customs received 767 comments.

Of the comments received against Customs position, 128 followed a form letter where the individual identified herself or himself as a member of the domestic costume industry. There were 625 comments submitted by individuals on various form letters. The comments