

open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest. NASD Regulation believes the proposed rule is necessary to protect investors and the public interest. The NASD rule requiring certain members to conduct or participate in Year 2000 tests, and to file reports about the tests, will enable NASD Regulation, those participating in the tests, and others to evaluate the readiness of securities industry for the Year 2000. The firms that would be required to conduct testing perform critical functions in the markets and these firms' inability to perform these functions beyond January 1, 2000 could cause disruptions in the markets and cause harm to investors.

*(B) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition*

NASD Regulation does not believe that the proposed rule change will result in any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Exchange Act, as amended.

*(C) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others*

Written comments were neither solicited nor received.

**III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action**

After careful consideration, the Commission has concluded, for the reasons set forth below, that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of the Exchange Act and the rules and regulations thereunder. Mandating Year 2000 testing and reporting is consistent with Section 15A(b)(6) <sup>7</sup> of the Exchange Act. Section 15A(b)(6) of the Exchange Act requires that the NASD's rules be designed, among other things, to foster cooperation and coordination with persons engaged in regulating, clearing, settling, processing information with respect to, and facilitating transactions in securities, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest. The Commission believes that the proposed rule change will facilitate the NASD's efforts to ensure the securities markets' continued smooth operation on and after January 1, 2000.

The Commission finds good cause for approving the proposal and Amendment

No. 1 thereto prior to the 30th day after the date of publication of notice of the filing in the **Federal Register**. It is vital that SROs have the authority to mandate that their member firms participate in Year 2000 testing and that they report test results (and other Year 2000 information) to their SRO's. The proposed rule change will help the NASD participate in coordinating industry-wide and other testing. This, in turn, will help ensure that the SIA's tests and the NASD's Year 2000 efforts are successful. The proposed rule change will also help the NASD work with its member firms, the SIA, and other SROs to minimize any possible disruptions the Year 2000 may cause.

**IV. Solicitation of Comments**

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Exchange Act. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20549. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the NASD. All submissions should refer to the file number in the caption above and should be submitted by December 31, 1998.

**V. Conclusion**

*It is therefore ordered*, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Exchange Act,<sup>8</sup> that the proposal, SR-NASD-98-75, including Amendment No. 1 thereto, be and hereby is approved on an accelerated basis.<sup>9</sup>

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

<sup>9</sup> In approving the proposal, the Commission has considered the rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

<sup>10</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-32825 Filed 12-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-M

**SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**Data Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations**

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Small Business Administration's intentions to request approval on a new, and/or currently approved information collection.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted on or before February 8, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Curtis B. Rich, Management Analyst, Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street, SW, Suite 5000, Washington, DC. 20416. Phone Number: 202-205-6629.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* "Supplemental Loan Guarantee Agreement".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No.:* SBA Form 1918.

*Description of Respondents:* SBA Express Lenders.

*Annual Responses:* 200.

*Annual Burden:* 50.

*Title:* "SBA Express Borrower Information".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No.:* SBA Form 1919.

*Description of Respondents:* Proprietor, Partner, Holder with 20% or more voting stock of a corporate.

*Annual Responses:* 12,000.

*Annual Burden:* 1,000.

*Title:* "Request for SBA Express Loan Number".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No.:* SBA Form 1920.

*Description of Respondents:* SBA Express Lenders.

*Annual Responses:* 10,000.

*Annual Burden:* 833.

*Title:* "Lender Checklist for PLP/SBA Express, Notification and Request".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No.:* SBA Form 2091.

*Description of Respondents:* SBA Express Lenders.

*Annual Responses:* 10,000.

*Annual Burden:* 833.

*Title:* "Eligibility Information Required for SBA Express Submission".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No.:* SBA Form 2092.

*Description of Respondents:* SBA Express Lenders.

*Annual Responses:* 10,000.

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

*Annual Burden:* 2,500.

*Title:* "Supplemental Information for PLP/SBA, Express Processing".

*Type of Request:* New Collection.

*Form No:* SBA Form 2093.

*Description of Respondents:* SBA Express Lenders.

*Annual Responses:* 10,000.

*Annual Burden:* 2,500.

Comments: Send all comments regarding these information collections to, Charles Thomas, Financial Analyst, Pilot Operations Branch, Office of Financial Assistance, Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW, Suite 8300, Washington, DC 20416. Phone No.: 202-205-6656.

Send comments regarding whether these information collections are necessary for the proper performance of the function of the agency, accuracy of burden estimate, in addition to ways to minimize these estimates, and ways to enhance the quality.

**Jacqueline K. White,**

*Chief, Administrative Information Branch.*

[FR Doc. 98-32761 Filed 12-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### [Declaration of Disaster #3146]

#### State of Kansas; Amendment #3

In accordance with information received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the above-numbered Declaration is hereby amended to include the Counties of Johnson, Leavenworth, Marion, and Wyandotte in the State of Kansas as a disaster area due to damages caused by severe storms and flooding beginning on October 30, 1998 and continuing through November 15, 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 location: Atchison, Dickinson, and Saline Counties in the State of Kansas, and Cass, Clay, Jackson, and Platte Counties in the State of Missouri. Any counties contiguous to the above-named primary counties and not listed herein have been previously declared.

The number for economic injury in the State of Missouri is 9A5800.

All other information remains the same, i.e., the deadline for filing applications for physical damage is January 4, 1999 and for economic injury the termination date is August 5, 1999.

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

Dated: December 2, 1998.

**Bernard Kulik,**

*Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.*

[FR Doc. 98-32760 Filed 12-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

## OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

### World Trade Organization (WTO)

**AGENCY:** Office of the United States Trade Representative.

**ACTION:** Solicitation of Public Comment Regarding U.S. Preparations for Multilateral Negotiations on Government Procurement Issues.

**SUMMARY:** The Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is providing notice of the U.S. intention to develop proposals and positions related to negotiations on government procurement issues under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Committee of Participants of the WTO Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) are engaged in negotiations on the potential improvement of that Agreement, as provided for in Article XXIV.7(b) of that Agreement. The current text of the GPA is available on the WTO world wide web site, at [www.wto.org/wto/govt/agreem.htm](http://www.wto.org/wto/govt/agreem.htm). Currently, there are 26 participants in the GPA (see the supplementary information, below).

As previously noted in section IV of the TPSC's August 19, 1998 notice of preparations for the third Ministerial Conference of the WTO (**Federal Register**, Volume 63, number 160, pages 44500-44502), the TPSC is also developing proposals and positions related to WTO consultations and negotiations on transparency in government procurement under the ongoing WTO work program agreed at the December 1996 WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore.

The TPSC invites public comment regarding the development of the agenda, scope, content and timetables for these negotiations. The Administration seeks views on the broadest possible range of issues for consideration, including the content of international rules relating to government procurement and specific U.S. market access interests. The deadline for written comments is Friday, January 15, 1999.

Decisions on the potential improvement of the GPA will be based on consensus among the 26 participants to the Agreement. Decisions related to the development of a potential WTO Agreement on Transparency in

Government Procurement will be based on consensus among WTO Members. This solicitation is intended to facilitate the Administration's preparation of U.S. proposals and positions for these negotiations, and acceptance of such proposals by participants.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For procedural questions on the provision of public comments, contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, (202) 395-3475. For questions relating to the substance of WTO negotiations on transparency in government procurement or of negotiations on the improvement of the GPA, contact John Ellis, Director for Government Procurement, at 202/395-3063.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### I. The WTO Working Group on Transparency in Government Procurement

At the December 1996 WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore, WTO members agreed to "establish a working group to conduct a study on transparency in government procurement practices, taking into account national policies, and, based on this study, to develop elements for inclusion in an appropriate agreement." Taking into account the significant progress that has been made to date in the study phase of the Working Group's mandate, the trade ministers of the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Canada have called for the conclusion of a WTO agreement on transparency in government by the time of the Third WTO Ministerial Conference, scheduled for late 1999 in the United States.

#### II. The WTO Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The GPA, which entered into force on January 1, 1996, is a "plurilateral" agreement included in Annex 4 to the WTO Agreement. As such, it is not part of the WTO "single undertaking" and its Membership is limited to WTO Members that specifically signed it in Marrakesh or that subsequently accede to it. The GPA's current Membership include the United States, the member states of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom), the Kingdom of the Netherlands with respect to Aruba, Canada, Hong Kong China, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Norway, Singapore, and Switzerland. Iceland,