

performance of PCX equity specialists (e.g., price improvement and trading in size greater than the NBBO) are appropriate means of helping to determine whether a PCX equity specialist in performing its specialist duties to maintain a fair and orderly market.¹³

Further, the Commission finds that the proposal is consistent with the Act, particularly section 11(b)¹⁴ of the Act and Rule 11b-1¹⁵ under the Act, which allows securities exchanges to permit exchange members to register as specialists, providing that the exchange requires the specialist to assist in maintaining a fair and orderly market. As discussed, the means PCX has chosen to assess those duties and the means of sanctioning specialists who fail to meet their obligations (e.g., restrictions on further stock allocations) are appropriate and consistent with the Act.

The Commission finds good cause for approving the proposed rule change prior to the thirtieth day after the date of publication of notice of the filing in the **Federal Register**. The Exchange has stated that the program is operating successfully and without any problems. Accelerated approval will permit the Specialist Evaluation program to continue on an uninterrupted basis. In addition, the rule change that implemented the pilot program in its current form and the rule change that subsequently extended pilot program were noticed for the full statutory period and the Commission received no comments on the proposed rule changes. Accordingly, the Commission does not believe that the current filing raises any regulatory issues not raised in the previous filings.

It is therefore ordered, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2)¹⁶ of the Act, that the proposed rule change (SR-PCX-99-46), as amended, is approved on an accelerated basis.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁷

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

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¹³ In approving this rule change, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78k(b).

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.11b-1.

¹⁶ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

¹⁷ CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3174]

Advisory Committee on International Communications and Information Policy; Meeting Notice

The Department of State is announcing the next meeting of its Advisory Committee on International Communications and Information Policy. The Committee provides a formal channel for regular consultation and coordination on major economic, social and legal issues and problems in international communications and information policy, especially as these issues and problems involve users of information and communication services, providers of such services, technology research and development, foreign industrial and regulatory policy, the activities of international organizations with regard to communications and information, and developing country interests.

The purpose of the meeting will be for the members to look at the substantive issues on which the committee should focus, as well as specific countries and regions of interest to the committee. In addition, the Committee members will review the activities of the various working groups of the Advisory Committee.

This meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2000, from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in Room 1107 of the Main Building of the U.S. Department of State, located at 2201 "C" Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520. Members of the public may attend these meetings up to the seating capacity of the room. While the meeting is open to the public, admittance to the State Department Building is only by means of a pre-arranged clearance list. In order to be placed on the pre-clearance list, please provide your name, title, company, social security number, date of birth, and citizenship to Timothy C. Finton at <fintontc@state.gov>. All attendees for this meeting must use the 23rd Street entrance. One of the following valid ID's will be required for admittance: Any U.S. driver's license with photo, a passport, or a U.S. Government agency ID. Non-U.S. Government attendees must be escorted by State Department personnel at all times when in the State Department building.

For further information, contact Timothy C. Finton, Executive Secretary of the Committee, at (202) 647-5385 or <fintontc@state.gov>.

Dated: December 20, 1999.

Timothy C. Finton,

Executive Secretary of the Advisory Committee on International Communications and Information Policy, U.S. Department of State.

[FR Doc. 99-33651 Filed 12-27-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice No. 3185]

Shipping Coordinating Committee; Subcommittee on Safety of Life at Sea and Associated Bodies; Notice of Meeting

The Shipping Coordinating Committee will conduct an open meeting at 10 A.M. on Wednesday, January 19, 2000, in Room 6319, at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize preparations for the Flag State Implementation (FSI) Subcommittee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) which is scheduled for January 24-28, 2000, at the IMO Headquarters in London. At this meeting, the U.S. position on documents submitted for consideration at the eighth session of the FSI Subcommittee will be discussed.

Among other things, the items of particular interest are:

1. Responsibilities of Governments and measures to encourage flag State compliance;
2. Comprehensive analysis of difficulties encountered in the implementation of IMO instruments;
3. Self-assessment of flag State performance;
4. Implications arising when a vessel loses the right to fly the flag of a State;
5. Revision of Survey Guidelines (A.746(18)) and Guidelines on Surveys (A.560(14));
6. Guidelines for unscheduled inspections of roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) passenger vessels;
7. Introduction of the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC) into MARPOL Annex VI on prevention of air pollution;
8. Analysis and evaluation of deficiency reports and mandatory reports under the International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78);
9. Casualty statistics and investigations;
10. Regional cooperation on port State control;
11. Results of inspections; and,
12. Mandatory reporting procedures on port State control detentions.

Members of the public may attend the meeting up to the capacity of the room. Interested persons may seek information by contacting Mr. David Deaver, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (G-MOC-4), 2100 Second Street, SW, Room 1116, Washington, DC 20593-0001; telephone: (202) 267-0502; email: ddeaver@comdt.uscg.mil.

Dated: December 20, 1999.

Stephan M. Miller,

Executive Secretary, Shipping Coordinating Committee, Department of State.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Request for Public Comment Regarding Negotiations Toward a Free Trade Area of the Americas

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: The interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) seeks public comment as part of its efforts to develop proposals and positions concerning toward the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The TPSC seeks public comment with respect to all aspects of the FTAA negotiations.

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 at (202) 395-3475. All other questions concerning the FTAA negotiations should be addressed to the agency's Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs at (202) 395-5190. Additionally, the official FTAA website (www.ftaa-alca.org) contains information regarding the FTAA process, including official documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

FTAA Chronology

Miami Summit of the Americas. 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) no later than the year 2005 and to achieve concrete progress toward that objective by the end of this century. The Miami Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action announced the agreements reached by the leaders at the first

Summit of the Americas. With respect to the FTAA, the Plan of Action states in part:

We will strive to maximize market openness through high levels of discipline as we build upon existing agreements in the Hemisphere. We will also strive for balanced and comprehensive agreements, including 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 Plan of Action also states:

Free trade and increased economic integration are key factors for sustainable development. This will be furthered as we strive to make our trade liberalization and environmental policies mutually supportive, taking into account efforts undertaken by the GATT/WTO and other international organizations. As economic integration in the Hemisphere proceeds, we will further secure the observance and promotion of worker rights, as defined by appropriate international conventions. We will avoid disguised restrictions on trade, in accordance with the GATT/WTO and other international obligations.

San Jose Ministerial. The 34 Western Hemisphere ministers responsible for trade met on March 19, 1998 in San Jose, Costa Rica. At the San Jose meeting, 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. In this context, the trade ministers proposed the creation of nine negotiating groups and three non-negotiating committees and groups. They also established the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) to guide the work of the negotiating groups and decide on the overall architecture of the FTAA agreement and to address institutional issues.

Trade ministers also reiterated that the FTAA negotiations 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." The San Jose Ministerial Declaration, as well as the Miami Declaration, can be accessed through the official FTAA website (www.ftaa-alca.org).

Santiago Summit of the Americas. On April 18-19, 1998, President Clinton and his 33 counterparts 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 included the establishment of nine negotiating groups to be guided by the principles and objectives agreed by the ministers in San Jose.

The nine negotiating groups established by the FTAA countries are responsible for the following areas of the negotiations: (1) Market access; (2) investment; (3) services; (4) government procurement; (5) dispute settlement; (6) agriculture; (7) intellectual property rights; (8) subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties; and (9) competition policy. In addition to the nine negotiating groups, three non-negotiating committees and groups were established. They are: (1) The Consultative Group on Smaller Economies; (2) the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society; and (3) the Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce. The negotiating groups and non-negotiating committees and groups began meeting in September 1998.

Toronto Ministerial Meeting. On November 3-4, 1999, the FTAA ministers met in Toronto to review the progress made by the negotiating groups during the first phase of the negotiations and to determine the next steps to be taken in the FTAA process. The ministers in Toronto expressed approval of the progress made by the negotiating groups and directed them to begin preparing draft texts of their respective chapters, to be completed by the next meeting of FTAA ministers in April 2001.

Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society. At the 1998 meeting in San Jose, the trade ministers jointly recognized and welcomed the interests and concerns expressed by a broad spectrum of interested non-governmental parties in the hemisphere and encouraged these and other parties to provide their views on trade matters related to the FTAA negotiations. In order to facilitate this process, the ministers agreed to establish the aforementioned Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society. The TPSC published a **Federal Register** notice on July 29, 1998 (63 FR 40579) requesting comments on the operation of the Committee, which was mandated to receive, analyze, and report on the full range of comments received from civil society from throughout the