

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) intentions to request approval for three years of an existing information collection entitled "EUSC/Parent Company."

DATES: Comments should be submitted on or before March 20, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Melvin Geller, Office of National Security Plans, Maritime Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Room P1-1303, Washington, D.C. 20590, telephone number—202-366-5910. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: EUSC/Parent Company.

Type of Request: Approval of an existing information collection.

OMB Control Number: 2133-0511.

Form Number: None.

Expiration Date of Approval: Three years from the date of approval.

Summary of Collection of Information: The collection of information consists of an inventory of foreign register vessels owned by Americans. Specifically, the collection consists of responses from vessel owners verifying or correcting vessel ownership data and characteristics found in commercial publications. The information obtained could be vital in a national or international emergency, and is essential to the logistical support planning operations conducted by MARAD officials.

Need and Use of the Information: The information obtained will be used for contingency planning for sealift requirements primarily as a source of ships to move essential oil and bulk cargoes in support of the national economy.

Description of Respondents: Foreign register American vessel owners.

Annual Responses: 92 responses.

Annual Burden: 46 hours.

Comments: Comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document. Written comments may be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Comments may also be submitted by electronic means via the Internet at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>. Specifically, address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance quality, utility, and clarity of the information to

be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. et Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Dated: January 13, 2000.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00-1287 Filed 1-19-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-98-3848; Notice 3]

Beall Trailers of Washington, Inc.; Petition for Renewal of Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224

Beall Trailers of Washington, Inc., of Kent, Washington, ("Beall"), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Beall Corporation, has asked us to renew, for three years, the temporary exemption we granted it in July 1998 from Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 224 *Rear Impact Protection*. The basis of the petition is that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with the standard.

We are publishing this notice of receipt of the petition in accordance with our regulations on the subject. This action does not represent that we have made any judgment about the merits of the petition.

On July 8, 1998, we granted Beall's initial exemption petition, assigning it NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 98-5, expiring July 1, 1999 (63 FR 36989). On April 20, 1999, we received Beall's application for renewal, which was filed in time to stay the expiration date of the exemption, as provided by 49 CFR 555.8(e). Following our request, Beall provided more current financial and production information on October 28, 1999 to supplement its new petition.

Beall manufactures and sells dump body trailers. It (identified in the petition as "Truckweld") produced a total of 311 trailers in 1997, of which 124 were dump body types. Truckweld trailer production in 1998 was down to 135 units but the number of dump body types was not stated.

Standard No. 224 requires, effective January 26, 1998, that all trailers with a GVWR of 4536 Kg or more, including dump body types, be fitted with a rear

impact guard that conforms to Standard No. 223 *Rear impact guards*. Beall argued earlier that "alterations may have to be made to the trailer chassis or even raising the dump box to provide space for the retractable guard," indicating that a guard that retracts when the dump body is in operation is the solution it is seeking in order to comply. During the time that its exemption has been in effect, Beall "has, in good faith, made attempts to design a compliant device." It states that it has developed "a number of potential designs" including an articulating design, but "these devices * * * do not meet FMVSS 224, have interferences with paving equipment, or have severe maintenance issues." The company is still testing hinged, retractable devices but three issues must be overcome. First, space for a retracted device is not readily available "due to the clearance issues in connecting to pavers." Raising the box also raises the center of gravity and reduces the stability of the trailers "thereby endangering others." Second, "asphalt service will, over a period of time, render such devices unusable." Finally, "it would be possible to operate a trailer with these type (sic) of devices in the retracted position, therefore not in compliance." It will continue its efforts to conform during the three-year exemption period it has requested.

If a renewal of the exemption is not granted, substantial economic hardship will result. First, it would lose a trailer that accounts for 40 percent of its overall production. In addition, "some percentage of the remaining 60% would be lost since our customers typically purchase matching truck mounted dump bodies which may also be lost." It also believes that 31 of its 63 employees would have to be laid off if its application is denied. It argues that maintenance of full employment would be in the public interest. Beall's net income was \$39,317 in fiscal year 1995, \$72,213 in 1996, \$697,040 before income taxes in 1997, and \$326,255 in 1998.

We welcome your written comments on Beall's petition. Please send three copies, headed with the docket and notice number shown at the top of this document, and addressed to: Docket Management, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. We consider all comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date below. The comments will be available for your examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. To the extent possible, we will also

consider comments filed after the closing date. We shall publish notice of our final action on the petition in the **Federal Register** under the authority of 49 U.S.C. 30113, and the delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.4.

Comment closing date: February 22, 2000.

Issued on: January 14, 2000.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Acting Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 00-1356 Filed 1-19-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 2000-6787; Notice 1]

Currie Technologies, Inc., Receipt of Application for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards Nos. 108 and 123

Currie Technologies, Inc. ("Currie"), of Van Nuys, California, a Nevada Corporation, has applied for a temporary exemption of two years from certain requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*, and of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 123 *Motorcycle Controls and Displays*. The basis of the request is that "compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried to comply with the standard in good faith," 49 U.S.C. Sec. 30113(b)(3)(B)(i).

We are publishing this notice of receipt of an application in accordance with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30113(b)(2), and does not represent any judgment on the merits of the application.

Why Currie Says That it Needs a Temporary Exemption

Since March 1, 1997, Currie has produced "fewer than 1,000" electric bicycles with a "power assist." Its "power assisted" electric bicycles incorporate a "pedal torque enable system" which require that the rider pedal the bicycle in order to activate the motor. Because Currie's "power assist" will not operate in the absence of muscular power, a bicycle equipped with the "power assist" is not a motor vehicle subject to our regulations. Currie now intends to manufacture a bicycle propelled by an electric motor of less than 1/2 hp which will operate in the absence of muscular power. A motorized bicycle that can operate in

the absence of muscular power is a "motor vehicle." As the manufacturer of a "motor vehicle," Currie must comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety regulations. For purposes of compliance with the Federal motor vehicle safety standards, any two-wheeled motor vehicle is a "motorcycle." However, some provisions of the Federal motor vehicle motorcycle safety standards contain lesser performance requirements for "motor driven cycles." These are motorcycles with engines producing 5 hp or less, such as the Currie vehicle.

Currie believes that compliance with portions of the Federal motorcycle safety standards on lighting and controls will cause it substantial economic hardship. It requests that it be exempted from providing the headlamps, taillamps, stop lamps, and license plate lamps required by Standard No. 108, and handlebar-located front and rear brake controls.

Why Currie Says That Compliance Would Cause Substantial Economic Hardship and it Has Tried in Good Faith To Comply With the Standards

Currie's resources are limited. From its inception on February 28, 1997 through December 31, 1998, the company had cumulative net losses of \$703,054. The costs of tooling for the lamps needed to comply with Standard No. 108 are estimated to be \$120,000. This, in turn, would require an increase in the retail cost of each vehicle that could be as much as \$300. The vehicle currently retails for \$899, and if the company raises the price to \$1,199, "this will result in pricing the product well above the \$1,000 price point threshold and effectively nullify all future sales." Further, "with the money invested in the company to date and the requirement for at least minimum operating capital, our company will go out of business unless minimum capital to cover operating expenses is generated through sales." Beginning in July 1998, it researched and tested off-the-shelf motorcycle and moped headlamps, taillamps and stop lamps at Jute Manufacturing Company in Taiwan. Currie found that these lamps added over 5 pounds weight, reducing the total range per charge (which reduces the appeal of the product as range per charge decreases). The batteries of the Currie electric bicycle carry only 250 watt-hours; the lamps tested are inefficient and will draw more energy from the batteries. To provide heavier, more efficient batteries will increase the price and reduce the range per charge. While the exemption is in effect, Currie will explore other options such as

designing vehicle-specific lighting equipment. It estimates that it can achieve compliance by December 2000. During the exemption period, its vehicles will be equipped with the following reflectors: one white in front, one red in rear, one white on each rim, and two yellow on each pedal.

The company's arguments about compliance with Standard No. 123 are based upon its safety views. A bicycle is configured to have the lever controlling the rear brake on the right handlebar. To reverse this position creates the possibility of confusion in riders who must apply brakes quickly. Currie gives as an example:

When coasting too fast down hills, the natural instinct is to activate the right-hand lever (rear brake) first. This prevents the rear end of the bicycle from cartwheeling over the front. With the brake reversal, the front brake is activated first, causing dangerous catapulting. This is a common occurrence with novice bicyclists. The moped brake reversal accentuates this danger, and, in fact, a number of accidents have occurred for this reason.

The company does comply with the requirements of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for bicycles that the rear brake shall be activated by a control located on the right handlebar and the front brake activated by a control on the left handlebar.

Why Currie Says that an Exemption is Consistent With the Public Interest and the Objectives of Motor Vehicle Safety

Currie submits that the electric bicycle "is an environmentally friendly, zero-emission vehicle, and that mass-marketed electric bicycles "will help to ease the transition from gas powered vehicles into the nascent electric vehicle market."

Because the maximum speed of the electric bicycle is 16 mph when driven by the motor alone, and because a standard bicycle without motor "can easily travel at speeds greater than 16 mph, solely under human input," Currie argues that "this electric bicycle should not be required to have any greater illumination requirements than that of a standard bicycle." It believes that aftermarket bicycle lights are adequate. On November 10, 1999, it informed us that "typical halogen bicycle lights are added for night operation as for regular bicycles."

In addition to the arguments regarding its compliance with the brake control specifications of the CPSC, as discussed above, Currie is concerned that, as its electric bicycle "looks, feels, and rides like a standard bicycle," a rider familiar with bicycle braking systems might make a mistake were the electric bicycle