

agency, whether the burden estimates are accurate, and if there are ways to minimize the estimated burden and enhance the quality of the collection, to John Wade, Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Assistance, Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street, SW., Suite 8300, Washington DC 20416

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Wade, Financial Analyst, (202) 205-3647 or Curtis B. Rich, Management Analyst, (202) 205-7030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Reports to SBA; Provisions of 13 CFR 120.472.

Form No: N/A.

Description of Respondents: Small Business Lending Companies.

Annual Responses: 14.

Annual Burden: 1,120.

Jacqueline White,

Chief, Administrative Information Branch.

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Wisconsin District Advisory Board; Public Meeting

The U.S. Small Business Administration advisory board will hold a public meeting on Wednesday May 15, 2002. The Wisconsin Advisory Council meeting will take place at the Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce building located at 756 North Milwaukee Street, 4th floor Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The time set forth is 12 noon to 1 pm. The purpose for this meeting will be to discuss such matters as may be presented by members, staff of the U.S. Small Business Administration or others present. For further information, please write or call Yolanda Staples-Lassiter, U.S. Small Business Administration, 310 West Wisconsin Ave., Suite 400 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202; telephone: (414) 297-1090. The public is invited.

Steve Tupper,

Committee Management Officer.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

[Docket No. WTO/DS-204]

WTO Dispute Settlement Regarding Telecommunications Trade Barriers in Mexico

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the United States Trade Representative ("USTR") is providing notice that, on April 17, 2002, the Dispute Settlement Body ("DSB") of the World Trade Organization ("WTO") established a dispute settlement panel to examine U.S. claims regarding certain Mexican Government measures affecting basic telecommunications services and the consistency of such measures with Mexico's commitments under the *General Agreement on Trade in Services* ("GATS"). The United States requested establishment of a panel on February 13, 2002. USTR invites written comments from the public concerning the issues raised in this dispute.

DATES: Although the USTR will accept any comments received during the course of the dispute settlement proceedings, comments should be submitted on or before May 25, 2002 to be assured of timely consideration by USTR.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments to Sandy McKinzy, Monitoring and Enforcement Unit, Room 122, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20508, Attn: Mexico Telecommunications Dispute. Telephone: (202) 395-3582.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Demetrios J. Marantis, Associate General Counsel, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, (202) 395-7305.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to section 127(b) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA) (19 U.S.C. 3537(b)(1)), the USTR is providing notice that, on April 17, 2002, the WTO DSB established a dispute settlement panel at the request of the United States to examine Mexican measures affecting basic telecommunications services. The United States requested establishment of a WTO dispute settlement panel on February 13, 2002. The United States previously invited comments from the public after the United States requested consultations with Mexico regarding telecommunications trade barriers in August 2000.¹ USTR is hereby providing additional opportunity for comment on the issues identified in the February 13, 2002 panel request and described below.

Major Issues Raised by the United States

Mexico maintains measures—largely as a result of its "International Long Distance Rules"—that the United States considers to be inconsistent with

Mexico's commitments under the GATS. For instance the current "interconnection" rate that all Mexican carriers must charge their foreign counterparts for connecting their calls to Mexico is 13.5 U.S. cents per minute. This rate exceeds the cost of providing this service by over 200 percent even though Mexico committed under the WTO Reference Paper to ensure that its dominant phone company provides "interconnection" at rates that are "*basadas en costos*," or "based on cost."

Moreover, Mexican measures grant Mexico's dominant phone company the exclusive authority to negotiate this cross-border "interconnection" rate. Such measures empower Mexico's dominant phone company to set monopoly rates even though Mexico has an obligation under the WTO Reference Paper to maintain measures to prevent this company from engaging in anti-competitive practices.

Mexico's measures also discriminate against foreign suppliers by preventing them from sending calls into and out of Mexico over leased lines. However, Mexico has committed under the GATS to permit the supply of basic telecommunications services over leased lines on a national treatment basis and committed under the GATS *Annex on Telecommunications* to ensure that foreign basic telecommunications service suppliers have access to and use of leased lines to provide scheduled services.

Procedural Background

On August 17, 2000, the United States requested consultations with the Government of Mexico pursuant to Article 4 of the WTO *Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes* (DSU) and Article XXIII of the GATS regarding a wide range of measures affecting telecommunications services. The United States and Mexico held these consultations on October 10, 2000. The consultations provided helpful clarifications but did not resolve the dispute.

On November 10, 2000, the United States requested the establishment of a panel pursuant to Article 6 of the DSU. The DSB considered this request at its meeting on December 12, 2000, at which time the Government of Mexico objected to the establishment of a panel. On November 10, 2000, the United States also requested additional consultations with the Government of Mexico pursuant to Article 4 of the DSU and Article XXIII of the GATS regarding additional measures affecting telecommunications services. These consultations, held on January 16, 2001,

¹ 65 FR 52469 (August 29, 2000).