

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**Federal and State Technology Partnership Program To Provide Outreach and Technical Assistance to Small Technology-Based Businesses Interested in Becoming Involved or Presently Involved in Federal R&D Programs****AGENCY:** Small Business Administration.**ACTION:** Program Announcement No. FAST-04-R-0003.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) plans to issue Program Announcement No. FAST-04-R-0003 and invite applicants from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance services to technology-based small business owners. This program is authorized by § 34(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657d(c)). There is a one proposal per state limitation on this competition. Only one proposal from each state may be submitted to SBA for consideration, and this application must have an original, signed Letter of Endorsement from the State Governor (Mayor for the District of Columbia). Prospective recipients of SBA funding under this Program Announcement include both new applicants and current FAST Program service providers. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, state and local Economic Development Agencies, colleges and universities and Small Businesses Development Centers. Funds will be provided to conduct programs for a 12-month budget and performance period. Applications/proposals must be postmarked by 4 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, May 5, 2004. If using a delivery service other than the U.S. Postal Service, the application must be delivered and accepted by the Office of Procurement and Grants Management by the deadline specified above. SBA will select successful applicants using a competitive process. Applications will be reviewed and awarded simultaneously for new and incumbent applicants under this Announcement. Applicants must plan to target women and minority small businesses as well as those small businesses not traditionally involved in the SBIR/STTR programs. Applicants' technical proposal must contain information about its current status and past performance (incumbent applicant's only), and a plan describing how the effort will be sustained once the grant expires. The FAST Program is authorized through Fiscal Year 2005

and will be competed annually, subject to availability of funds. There is a cascading non-Federal match requirement for this program. The non-federal match requirement ratios are based on state rankings derived from FY 2002 Phase I SBIR awards. These ratios are 1:1, 2:1, and 3:4. The program announcement will be available at <http://www.sba.gov/sbir>.

DATES: The application period will be from March 11, 2004 until May 5, 2004.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cherina Hughes, (202) 205-7344 regarding the Program Announcement and Patricia Branch, (202) 205-7081 about budget matters.**Edsel M. Brown, Jr.,***Assistant Administrator, SBA Office of Technology.*

[FR Doc. 04-6352 Filed 3-19-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P**DEPARTMENT OF STATE****[Public Notice 4666]****Redesignation of Foreign Terrorist Organizations**

Pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, 8 U.S.C. 1189, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General, hereby redesignates, effective March 22, 2004, the following three organizations as foreign terrorist organizations:

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, also known as the al-Aqsa Martyrs Battalion

Asbat al-Ansar

Salafist Group for Call and Combat, also known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, also known as GSPC, also known as Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat.

Dated: March 15, 2004.

Cofer Black,*Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 04-6333 Filed 3-19-04; 5:00 pm]

BILLING CODE 4710-10-P**DEPARTMENT OF STATE****[Public Notice 4667]****Foreign Terrorists and Terrorist Organizations; Designation: Ansar al-Islam**

In the Matter of the Designation of Ansar al-Islam, also known as Devotees of Islam, also known as Followers of Islam in Kurdistan, also known as Helpers of Islam, also known as Jund al-

Islam, also known as Kurdistan Supporters of Islam, also known as Kurdish Taliban, also known as Partisans of Islam, also known as Soldiers of Islam, also known as Soldiers of God, also known as Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan, also known as Ansar al-Sunna, also known as Ansar al-Sunna Army, also known as Jaish Ansar al-Sunna, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Based upon a review of the Administrative Record assembled in this matter, and in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State has concluded that there is a sufficient factual basis to find that the relevant circumstances described in section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1189, hereinafter "INA"), exist with respect to Ansar al-Islam.

Therefore, effective March 22, 2004, the Secretary of State hereby designates that organization as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219(a) of the INA.

Dated: March 15, 2004.

Cofer Black,*Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 04-6334 Filed 3-19-04; 5:00 pm]

BILLING CODE 4710-10-P**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE****Opportunity To Apply for Membership on the 2004 U.S.-Japan Private Sector/Government Commission****AGENCY:** Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).**ACTION:** Notice of membership opportunity.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Government is seeking letters of interest for private sector membership on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Japan Private Sector/Government Commission (Commission) for 2004. President Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi launched the Commission in June 2001 as part of the U.S.-Japan Economic Partnership for Growth (Partnership). It is expected the 2004 Commission meeting will be held in mid-2004 on the topic of "Advancing U.S.-Japan Economic Cooperation."

DATES: In order to receive full consideration, letters of interest must be received by the U.S. Government Secretariat no later than April 27, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Please send requests for consideration by facsimile or express mail to *only* the U.S. Government Secretariat for the U.S.-Japan Private Sector/Government Commission in care of Karin Ryerson, Office of Japan, U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 2320, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230, facsimile (202) 482-0469. Requests sent by e-mail *will not* be considered. Candidates chosen for membership will be notified in writing.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The U.S. Government seeks letters of interest for private sector membership on the U.S. side of the 2004 U.S.-Japan Private Sector/Government Commission. President Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi launched the Commission in June 2001 as part of the Partnership. The Commission is made up of U.S. and Japanese Government and private sector representatives. It aims to integrate the U.S. and Japanese private sectors more fully into the economic work of the two Governments. The Commission enables U.S. and Japanese private sector representatives to present input—including expertise, observations, and recommendations—on an agenda topic agreed to in advance by the two Governments. For a description of the goals and structure of the Commission and the Partnership, see the Annex to the Joint Statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi on June 30, 2001, on the Department of Commerce Web site at: <http://www.mac.doc.gov/japan/source/menu/partnership/partnership2.html>.

Topic

The Commission topic is selected annually. This year's topic is "Advancing U.S.-Japan Economic Cooperation." It focuses on how the United States and Japan can most effectively work together to meet the emerging challenges facing the global economy. Discussions would center on greater cooperation in key areas that would include: Developing methods to ensure that goods and services can flow across borders as smoothly and securely as possible; fostering economic growth through new technologies; identifying structural and regulatory reforms that would expand business opportunities, increase market access, and promote a more entrepreneurial business climate; and achieving stronger intellectual property protection.

Duties and Responsibilities of Private Sector Members

Private sector individuals chosen for the Commission will be expected to be fully involved in all necessary preparatory meetings and attend the Commission's annual 2004 meeting. That meeting is expected to be held in mid-2004 in conjunction with a Subcabinet meeting of U.S. and Japanese Government officials at the Deputy/Vice-Ministerial level from key economic agencies and ministries and other agencies and ministries appropriate to the Commission's topic. The number of private sector Commission members will be limited and will be determined in coordination with the Japanese Government. Members of the private sector delegation from the United States will serve for one term. Members who wish to serve additional terms must apply under the same rules as other future prospective members.

Private sector members are fully responsible for travel, lodging and personal expenses associated with their participation in the Commission. They will receive no compensation. The private sector members will serve in a representative capacity, presenting the views and interests of the particular business sector in which they operate; private sector members are not special government employees. Candidates will be vetted for pending business before USTR and the Department of Commerce. Members from the private sector will be chosen based on criteria set forth in this Notice. Substitutions will not be permitted if a successful candidate is unable to fulfill his or her Commission duties.

Candidate Eligibility and Selection Procedures

The process for recruiting and selecting Commission members from the U.S. private sector is based on objective, written criteria developed in accordance with the Annex to the Joint Statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi. To be eligible for consideration, each candidate must be a U.S. citizen, be employed by a U.S. company,¹ and not be a registered

¹ A U.S. company is defined in the Procedures and Rules for Industry Sector Advisory Committees as a firm incorporated in the United States (or an unincorporated U.S. firm with its principal places of business in the United States) that is controlled by U.S. citizens or by another U.S. entity. An entity is not a U.S. company if 50 percent plus one share of its stock (if a corporation, or a similar ownership interest of an unincorporated entity) is controlled, directly or indirectly, by non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. entities. If the candidate is to represent an entity or corporation with 10 percent or greater non-U.S. ownership, the candidate must demonstrate at

foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938.

All requests for consideration will be reviewed by the U.S. Government Secretariat (Secretariat) for the Commission, which is composed of officials from USTR and the Department of Commerce. Members of the Secretariat will evaluate each submission based on the evaluation criteria provided below and recommend a roster of candidates to the Assistant USTR for North Asian Affairs and the Department of Commerce's Assistant Secretary for Market Access and Compliance (Selecting Officials). These Selecting Officials will review the Secretariat's recommendations and make the final determination on which candidates will be selected for the 2004 Commission.

Submission Procedures and Evaluation Criteria

To be considered for Commission membership, prospective candidates must submit a personal resume and a letter of interest on company letterhead that provides the information and responds directly to the criteria outlined below. Please limit submissions to these materials, which must be submitted by individual candidates and not by proxy. Referrals from political organizations and any references to political contributions or other partisan political activities will not be considered in the selection process. The following criteria will be considered:

- Stated reasons the candidate wishes to be considered for the Commission;
- Experience in executive-level positions, such as CEO of U.S. companies;
- Experience doing business with or in Japan;
- Expertise in the topic to be considered by the 2004 Commission;
- Commitment to undertake any necessary preparatory work and to participate in any preparatory meetings and the annual Commission meeting;
- Commitment to assume the costs of travel, lodging and other personal expenses related to Commission participation;
- Contributions to Commission membership diversity based on company size, type, and location; and
- Other considerations relevant to the Commission as described in the Annex to the Joint Statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi.

the time of selection that this ownership interest does not constitute control and will not adversely affect his or her ability to serve on the Commission.

Other required information that must be included in the application materials by candidates are:

- Name and title of the individual requesting consideration;
- Name and address of the company where the candidate is employed;
- The particular business sector the candidate would represent;
- Company's product or service line;
- Company size (market capitalization, annual revenues, number of employees); and
- Company's experience in Japan (exports, sales, employees, years in Japan).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Karin Ryerson, Office of Japan, Department of Commerce, Room 2320, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230, facsimile (202) 482-0469; or John Neuffer, Office of North Asian Affairs, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20508, facsimile (202) 395-3597.

Dated: March 16, 2004.

Wendy Cutler,

Assistant United States Trade Representative for North Asian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 04-6267 Filed 3-19-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3190-W3-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Hays and Caldwell Counties, State of Texas

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI) to rescind NOI of November 17, 1987.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that they are rescinding the NOI to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct a loop designated as Farm-to-Market (FM) 110 Loop around the City of San Marcos in Hays and Caldwell Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Salvador Deocampo, District Engineer, FHWA, Texas Division Office, 300 E. 8th Street, Suite 826, Austin, Texas, 78701, Telephone: (512) 536-5950.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, is rescinding the NOI published in the *Federal Register* on November 17, 1987, to prepare an EIS for a proposed FM 110 Loop roadway in Hays and Caldwell Counties, Texas. The project limits,

study area and the type of environmental documentation for the proposed FM 110 Loop have changed. In 1994, FM 110 was evaluated as a full-circle loop roadway in a Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (PDEIS), which was never officially approved by FHWA or distributed for agency or public review and comment. Since the preparation of the PDEIS, the western portion of the FM 110 Loop project has been eliminated from further consideration. However, based on the information gathered from the PDEIS, enough environmental analysis was developed to assess any potential impacts associated with the proposed FM 110 portion located east of IH-35. Therefore, based on that information, and since the scope of the original FM 110 has been decreased, an Environmental Assessment (EA) for only the portion of FM 110 east of IH-35 will be prepared instead of an EIS.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning, and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: March 11, 2004.

Salvador Deocampo,

District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

[FR Doc. 04-6314 Filed 3-19-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 408X)]

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Hamilton and Merrick Counties, NE

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon a 15.60-mile line of railroad between BNSF milepost 1.90, near Aurora, and milepost 17.50, near Central City, in Hamilton and Merrick Counties, NE. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 68818, 68854, and 68826.

BNSF has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic to be rerouted; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Board or with any U.S. District Court or

has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on April 21, 2004, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by April 1, 2004. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by April 12, 2004, with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to BNSF's representative: Michael Smith, Freeborn & Peters, 311 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 3000, Chicago, IL 60606-6677.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

BNSF has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by March 26, 2004. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

² Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,100. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).