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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Office of the Secretary

6 CFR Part 5

[Docket No. DHS-2011-0031]

Privacy Act of 1974: Implementation of Exemptions; Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records

AGENCY: Privacy Office, DHS.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Department of Homeland Security is issuing a final rule to amend its regulations to exempt portions of a Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard system of records titled, "Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records" from certain provisions of the Privacy Act. Specifically, the Department exempts portions of the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records from one or more provisions of the Privacy Act because of criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement requirements.

DATES: *Effective Date:* This final rule is effective May 13, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general questions please contact: Eileen Yenikaliotis (202-475-3530), Acting Privacy Officer, U.S. Coast Guard. For privacy issues please contact: Mary Ellen Callahan (703-235-0780), Chief Privacy Officer, Privacy Office, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) published a notice of proposed

rulemaking (NPRM) in the **Federal Register**, 73 FR 64899, October 31, 2008, proposing to exempt portions of the system of records from one or more provisions of the Privacy Act because of criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement requirements. The system of records is the DHS/USCG—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records. The DHS/USCG—008 Courts Martial Case Files system of records notice (SORN) was published concurrently in the **Federal Register**, 73 FR 64961, October 31, 2008. Comments were invited on both the NPRM and the SORN. Public comments were received on the NPRM. No comments were received on the SORN.

Public Comments

DHS/USCG received two public comments on the NPRM. The first comment focused on the rights of an individual stating that "in all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district where in the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense." This system will be used by the DHS/USCG to collect and maintain records on military and civilian employees of the DHS/USCG who are tried by, or involved with, a courts martial in the DHS/USCG. By issuing these exemptions, DHS/USCG is not abdicating its duty to conduct fair and impartial courts martial proceedings. Rather, these exemptions only apply to the Privacy Act and would not limit the ability of an individual to obtain records pursuant to other authorities, such as applicable rules for courts martial.

The second public comment received focused on withholding information from a member of the DHS/USCG uniformed service as a result of the exemptions claimed in the proposed rule. Exemptions claimed in the proposed rule are neither designed nor intended, without reason, to withhold information from anyone. However, it is occasionally necessary and appropriate for the DHS/USCG to protect material compiled for law enforcement purposes,

including some records pertaining to investigations, inquiries, and criminal proceedings, as well as national security and intelligence activities. No comments were received on the system of records notice. DHS will implement the rulemaking as proposed.

List of Subjects in 6 CFR Part 5

Freedom of information; Privacy.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, DHS amends Chapter I of Title 6, Code of Federal Regulations, as follows:

PART 5—DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS AND INFORMATION

■ 1. The authority citation for part 5 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Pub. L. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135, 6 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; 5 U.S.C. 301. Subpart A also issued under 5 U.S.C. 552. Subpart B also issued under 5 U.S.C. 552a.

■ 2. Add at the end of Appendix C to part 5, Exemption of Record Systems under the Privacy Act, paragraph 54 to read as follows:

Appendix C to Part 5—DHS Systems of Records Exempt From the Privacy Act

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12. The DHS/USCG—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records consists of electronic and paper records and will be used by DHS/USCG. The DHS/USCG—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records is a repository of information held by DHS/USCG in connection with its several and varied missions and functions, including, but not limited to: the enforcement of civil and criminal laws; investigations, inquiries, and proceedings thereunder; and national security and intelligence activities. The DHS/USCG—008 Courts Martial Case Files System of Records contains information that is collected by, on behalf of, in support of, or in cooperation with DHS/USCG and may contain personally identifiable information collected by other federal, state, local, tribal, foreign, or international government agencies. The Secretary of Homeland Security has exempted this system from the following provisions of the Privacy Act, subject to the limitations set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) and (c)(4); (d); (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (e)(4)(I), (e)(5) and (e)(8); (f); and (g) pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2). Additionally, the Secretary of Homeland Security has exempted this system from the following provisions of the Privacy Act, subject to the limitations set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3); (d); (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), (e)(4)(I); and (f) pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(1) and (k)(2). Exemptions from these particular subsections are justified, on a case-

by-case basis to be determined at the time a request is made, for the following reasons:

(a) From subsection (c)(3) and (c)(4) (Accounting for Disclosures) because release of the accounting of disclosures could alert the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS as well as the recipient agency. Disclosure of the accounting would therefore present a serious impediment to law enforcement efforts and/or efforts to preserve national security. Disclosure of the accounting would also permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension, which would undermine the entire investigative process.

(b) From subsection (d) (Access to Records) because access to the records contained in this system of records could inform the subject of an investigation of an actual or potential criminal, civil, or regulatory violation, to the existence of the investigation, and reveal investigative interest on the part of DHS or another agency. Access to the records could permit the individual who is the subject of a record to impede the investigation, to tamper with witnesses or evidence, and to avoid detection or apprehension. Amendment of the records could interfere with ongoing investigations and law enforcement activities and would impose an impossible administrative burden by requiring investigations to be continuously reinvestigated. In addition, permitting access and amendment to such information could disclose security-sensitive information that could be detrimental to homeland security.

(c) From subsection (e)(1) (Relevancy and Necessity of Information) because in the course of investigations into potential violations of federal law, the accuracy of information obtained or introduced occasionally may be unclear or the information may not be strictly relevant or necessary to a specific investigation. In the interests of effective law enforcement, it is appropriate to retain all information that may aid in establishing patterns of unlawful activity.

(d) From subsection (e)(2) (Collection of Information from Individuals) because requiring that information be collected from the subject of an investigation would alert the subject to the nature or existence of an investigation, thereby interfering with the related investigation and law enforcement activities.

(e) From subsection (e)(3) (Notice to Subjects) because providing such detailed information would impede law enforcement in that it could compromise investigations by revealing the existence of an otherwise confidential investigation and thereby provide an opportunity for the subject of an investigation to conceal evidence, alter patterns of behavior, or take other actions that could thwart investigative efforts; reveal the identity of witnesses in investigations, thereby providing an opportunity for the subjects of the investigations or others to harass, intimidate, or otherwise interfere

with the collection of evidence or other information from such witnesses; or reveal the identity of confidential informants, which would negatively affect the informant's usefulness in any ongoing or future investigations and discourage members of the public from cooperating as confidential informants in any future investigations.

(f) From subsections (e)(4)(G), (e)(4)(H), and (e)(4)(I) (Agency Requirements), and (f) (Agency Rules) because portions of this system are exempt from the individual access provisions of subsection (d) for the reasons noted above, and therefore DHS is not required to establish requirements, rules, or procedures with respect to such access. Providing notice to individuals with respect to existence of records pertaining to them in the system of records or otherwise setting up procedures pursuant to which individuals may access and view records pertaining to themselves in the system would undermine investigative efforts and reveal the identities of witnesses, and potential witnesses, and confidential informants.

(g) From subsection (e)(5) (Collection of Information) because in the collection of information for law enforcement purposes it is impossible to determine in advance what information is accurate, relevant, timely, and complete. Compliance with (e)(5) would preclude DHS agents from using their investigative training and exercise of good judgment to both conduct and report on investigations.

(h) From subsection (e)(8) (Notice on Individuals) because compliance would interfere with DHS' ability to obtain, serve, and issue subpoenas, warrants, and other law enforcement mechanisms that may be filed under seal, and could result in disclosure of investigative techniques, procedures, and evidence.

(i) From subsection (g) to the extent that the system is exempt from other specific subsections of the Privacy Act relating to individuals' rights to access and amend their records contained in the system. Therefore DHS is not required to establish rules or procedures pursuant to which individuals may seek a civil remedy for the agency's: refusal to amend a record; refusal to comply with a request for access to records; failure to maintain accurate, relevant, timely and complete records; or failure to otherwise comply with an individual's right to access or amend records.

Dated: April 19, 2011.

Mary Ellen Callahan,
*Chief Privacy Officer, Department of
Homeland Security.*

[FR Doc. 2011-11689 Filed 5-12-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 927

[Doc. No. AMS-FV-10-0072; FV10-927-1 FIR]

Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Amendment To Allow Additional Exemptions

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Adoption of interim rule as final.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture is adopting, as a final rule, without change, an interim rule that added an exemption to the marketing order for Oregon-Washington pears that provides for the sale of fresh pears directly to consumers without regard to regulation. For each customer, the interim rule provided an exemption for consumer-direct sales of up to 220 pounds of fresh pears per transaction, for home use only, made directly at orchards, packing facilities, roadside stands, or farmers' markets without regard to the marketing order's assessment, reporting, handling, and inspection requirements. This action is intended to provide increased marketing flexibility to small pear handlers, while facilitating the sale of fresh, local pears directly to consumers.

DATES: Effective May 16, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Teresa Hutchinson or Gary Olson, Northwest Marketing Field Office, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, Portland, Oregon; Telephone: (503) 326-2724, Fax: (503) 326-7440, or E-mail:

Teresa.Hutchinson@ams.usda.gov or *Gary.D.Olson@ams.usda.gov*.

Small businesses may obtain information on complying with this and other marketing order regulations by viewing a guide at the following Web site: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/MarketingOrdersSmallBusinessGuide>; or by contacting Laurel May, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250-0237; Telephone: (202) 720-2491, Fax: (202) 720-8938, or E-mail: *Laurel.May@ams.usda.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Order No. 927, as amended (7 CFR part 927), regulating the handling of pears grown in Oregon and Washington, hereinafter