

## B. Discussion of Public Comments

### 1. General Comments on Proposed Fee Increase

One commenter said that the fee increase is inconsistent with the Congressional declaration of policy for programs under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, including the SBG Program, to stimulate and improve the economy by establishing assistance programs for small business which are to be "carried out in such a manner as to insure maximum participation of private financing sources," 15 U.S.C. 661 (Section 661). The commenter said that the fee increase would discourage surety companies from participating in the SBG Program because it would not be economically viable or cost-effective, and several other commenters agreed.

Thirty-four of the commenters were concerned about the potentially negative impact that the fee increase would have on Sureties or small businesses. SBA received 23 comments opposing the fee increase because it may cause Sureties currently participating in the SBG Program to decrease their level of participation in it. One of the Sureties said that it would withdraw from the SBG Program completely if SBA increases the fee from the present 20% to 32% of the bond premium. Eleven commenters were concerned about the potentially negative impact that the fee increase would have on small business. Some commenters said that small contractors would ultimately bear the burden of the fee increase because Sureties would pass the cost on to them in the form of higher premium rates. Other commenters said that the fee increase would limit availability of bonds for small contractors based on assumptions that all Sureties would withdraw from the SBG Program and, consequently, the Program would no longer exist. Specific concerns were raised about the ability of 8(a), HUBZone, and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses to secure bonding for contracts obtained through SBA certification as well as for those small contractors seeking contracts to rebuild the Gulf Coast areas damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

SBA has given due consideration to each comment and acknowledges the concerns expressed by Sureties, surety agents, small contractors, and the industry associations to which those parties belong. In response to those comments, however, SBA notes that its duty under Section 661 must be balanced with its explicit statutory obligation to administer the Program "on a prudent and economically justifiable basis" and its authority to

establish fees for Sureties as SBA determines are reasonable and necessary, 15 U.S.C. 694b(h). SBA's duties and authorities must work in harmony. Although SBA has determined that the fee increase is necessary to supplement the current revolving fund reserves to better offset unfunded program liabilities, SBA only increased the fee the minimum amount necessary to operate the SBG Program "on a prudent and economically justifiable basis" to limit the negative impact on Sureties. In addition, SBA is considering procedural and policy changes to improve the Program to attract new surety companies to the SBG Program and to retain existing Sureties.

Furthermore, SBA recognizes that the fee increase may have some impact on small businesses, especially since Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. SBA notes that the notice proposing the fee increase was published in the **Federal Register** on August 15, 2005—two weeks before Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. As a result of the disaster, SBA expects that there will be an increase in bond activity through the SBG Program in the next six months because surety bonds are essential for small businesses seeking contracts to rebuild the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. Although the fee increase remains necessary to better offset unfunded liabilities of the SBG Program, SBA believes that the expected increase in bond activity due to Hurricane Katrina justifies postponing the effective date of fee increase from October 1, 2005, as originally proposed, to April 3, 2006. The 6-month delay will permit SBA, Sureties, and small businesses to operate under the existing framework in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

### 2. Suggested Improvements to SBG Program

Four of the commenters suggested specific operational and policy changes to the SBG Program that would streamline it, thus making the Program more attractive to new and existing Sureties. Specific changes suggested by the commenters include elimination of multiple applications requiring original signatures, expediting the application process, increasing the number of SBG personnel in the field, and providing Sureties with more flexibility to adjust premiums charged on guaranteed bonds.

SBA appreciates the comments from the industry on possible improvements to the SBG Program. SBA is considering a variety of program changes to encourage new surety companies to participate in the SBG Program, retain existing Sureties, and make the Program

more beneficial for small contractors. SBA reaffirms its commitment to expanding availability of bonds for small contractors by maintaining SBG program operations and making Program improvements. SBA will continue to reassess the Program, including its operations and projected costs, and aim to make it more efficient and cost-effective.

(Authority: 13 CFR 115.32(c) and 115.66)

**Michael W. Hager,**

*Associate Deputy Administrator, Office of Capital Access.*

[FR Doc. 05-19359 Filed 9-27-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 5195]

### Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations: "Saint Peter and the Vatican: The Legacy of the Popes"

*Summary:* Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.*; 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, and Delegation of Authority No. 236 of October 19, 1999, as amended, and Delegation of Authority No. 257 of April 15, 2003 [68 FR 19875], I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibition "Saint Peter and the Vatican: The Legacy of the Popes," imported from abroad for temporary exhibition within the United States, are of cultural significance. The objects are imported pursuant to a loan agreement with the foreign lender. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the exhibit objects at The Gallery at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center, San Antonio, TX from on or about October 15, 2005 to on or about January 8, 2006, The Milwaukee Public Museum from on or about February 4, 2006 to on or about May 7, 2006, and at possible additional venues yet to be determined, is in the national interest. Public Notice of these determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

*For further information contact:* For further information, including a list of the exhibit objects, contact Carol B. Epstein, Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State, (telephone: 202 453-8048). The address

is Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street, SW., Room 700, Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: September 21, 2005.

**C. Miller Crouch,**

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 05-19360 Filed 9-27-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4710-08-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. OST-95-177]

#### Notice of Request for Extension of Previously Approved Collection

**AGENCY:** Office of the Secretary.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for renewal and comment. The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on July 20, 2005 [FR Vol. 70, No. 138, pages 41808 and 41809]. No. comments were received.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by October 28, 2005, attention DOT/OST Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jack Schmidt, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-5420.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Disclosure of Change-of-Gauge Services.

*OMB Control Number:* 2105-0538.

*Affected Public:* All U.S. air carriers, foreign air carriers, computer reservations systems (CSRs), travel agents doing business in the United States, and the traveling public.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 205,908 to 617,736 hours.

*Comments are invited on:* (a) Whether this proposed collection of information

is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including through the use of automated techniques or other forms of information technology. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

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Issued in Washington, DC on September 21, 2005.

**Steven Lott,**

*Manager, Strategic Integration, IT Investment Management Office.*

[FR Doc. 05-19343 Filed 9-27-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-62-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Office of the Secretary

#### Aviation Proceedings, Agreements Filed the Week Ending September 2, 2005

The following Agreements were filed with the Department of Transportation under the sections 412 and 414 of the Federal Aviation Act, as amended (49 U.S.C. 1382 and 1384) and procedures governing proceedings to enforce these provisions. Answers may be filed within 21 days after the filing of the application.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22348.

*Date Filed:* September 1, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* Composite Expedited Resolution 201, Intended effective date: 15 September 2005.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22349.

*Date Filed:* September 1, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* Mail Vote 455-Resolution 010v, Special Passenger Amending Resolution between Japan and Thailand, TC3 Japan Korea, South-East Asia. Intended effective date: 1 November 2005.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22350.

*Date Filed:* September 1, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* Composite Passenger Tariff Coordinating Conference Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Composite Resolutions 002bc, 005i, 012c, 024d, 024e, 024k, 049d, 100, 201, 210, Minutes: Composite Meeting of Passenger Tariff, Coordinating Conferences (memo 1271), Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Technical Correction: Composite Passenger Tariff Coordinating Conference, Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Composite Resolutions 002bc, 005i, 012c, 024d, 024e, 024k, 049d, 100, 201, 210, Intended effective date: 1 April 2006.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22351.

*Date Filed:* September 1, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* Composite Resolution 300 (Memo 1267), Composite Passenger Tariff Coordinating Conference, Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Minutes: Composite Meeting of Passenger Tariff, Coordinating Conferences (memo 1271), Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Intended effective date: 1 April 2006.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22352.

*Date Filed:* September 1, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* Composite Resolutions 017a, 017c, 017e, 017f (Memo 1268), Minutes: Composite Meeting of Passenger Tariff Coordinating Conferences (Memo 1271), Montreal, 18-21 July 2005, Intended effective date: 01 April 2005.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22393.

*Date Filed:* September 2, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* PTC3/PTC31/PTC123, Special Passenger Amending Resolution 010u From Korea (Rep. of) to USA, U.S. Territories. Intended effective date 1 September 2005.

*Docket Number:* OST-2005-22394.

*Date Filed:* September 2, 2005.

*Parties:* Members of the International Air Transport Association.

*Subject:* PTC2/PTC3/PTC12/PTC23/PTC31/PTC123, Special Passenger Amending Resolution 010t. Intended effective date: 1 September 2005.

**Renee V. Wright,**

*Program Manager, Docket Operations, Federal Register Liaison.*

[FR Doc. 05-19341 Filed 9-27-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-62-P**