

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**[Docket No. SSA–2014–0075]****Rate for Assessment on Direct Payment of Fees to Representatives in 2015****AGENCY:** Social Security Administration (SSA).**ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: We are announcing that the assessment percentage rate under sections 206(d) and 1631(d)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (Act), 42 U.S.C. 406(d) and 1383(d)(2)(C), is 6.3 percent for 2015.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jeffrey C. Blair, Associate General Counsel for Program Law, Office of the General Counsel, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235–6401, Phone: (410) 965–3157, email *Jeff.Blair@ssa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A claimant may appoint a qualified individual as a representative to act on his or her behalf in matters before the Social Security Administration. If the individual was represented either by an attorney or by a non-attorney representative who has met certain prerequisites, the Act provides that we may withhold up to 25 percent of the past-due benefits and use that money to pay the representative's approved fee directly to the representative.

When we pay the representative's fee directly to the representative, we must collect from that fee payment an assessment to recover the costs we incur in determining and paying representatives' fees. The Act provides that the assessment we collect will be the lesser of two amounts: A specified dollar limit; or the amount determined by multiplying the fee we are paying by the assessment percentage rate. (Sections 206(d), 206(e), and 1631(d)(2) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d), 406(e), and 1383(d)(2).)

The Act initially set the dollar limit at \$75 in 2004 and provides that the limit will be adjusted annually based on changes in the cost-of-living. (Sections 206(d)(2)(A) and 1631(d)(2)(C)(ii)(I) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d)(2)(A) and 1383(d)(2)(C)(ii)(I).) The maximum dollar limit for the assessment currently is \$91, as we announced in the **Federal Register** on October 29, 2014 (79 FR 64455).

The Act requires us each year to set the assessment percentage rate at the lesser of 6.3 percent or the percentage rate necessary to achieve full recovery of the costs we incur to determine and pay

representatives' fees. (Sections 206(d)(2)(B)(ii) and 1631(d)(2)(C)(ii)(II) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d)(2)(B)(ii) and 1383(d)(2)(C)(ii)(II).)

Based on the best available data, we have determined that the current rate of 6.3 percent will continue for 2015. We will continue to review our costs for these services on a yearly basis.

Dated: December 18, 2014.

Peter D. Spencer,*Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management.*

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BILLING CODE 4191–02–P**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE****2015 Special 301 Review: Identification of Countries Under Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974: Request for Public Comment and Announcement of Public Hearing****AGENCY:** Office of the United States Trade Representative.**ACTION:** Request for written submissions from the public and announcement of public hearing.

SUMMARY: Section 182 of the Trade Act of 1974 (Trade Act) (19 U.S.C. 2242) requires the United States Trade Representative (Trade Representative) to identify countries that deny adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) or deny fair and equitable market access to U.S. persons who rely on intellectual property protection. The provisions of Section 182 are commonly referred to as the “Special 301” provisions of the Trade Act. The Trade Act requires the Trade Representative to determine which, if any, of these countries to identify as Priority Foreign Countries. Acts, policies, or practices that are the basis of a country's identification as a Priority Foreign Country can be subject to the procedures set out in sections 301–305 of the Trade Act.

In addition, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has created a “Priority Watch List” and “Watch List” to assist the Administration in pursuing the goals of the Special 301 provisions. Placement of a trading partner on the Priority Watch List or Watch List indicates that particular problems exist in that country with respect to IPR protection, enforcement, or market access for persons that rely on intellectual property protection. Trading partners placed on the Priority Watch List are the focus of increased bilateral attention concerning the problem areas.

USTR chairs the Special 301 Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee (Subcommittee). The Subcommittee reviews information from many sources, and consults with and makes recommendations to the Trade Representative on issues arising under Special 301. Written submissions from interested persons are a key source of information for the Special 301 review process. In 2015, USTR again will conduct a public hearing as part of the review process as well as offer the opportunity, as described below, for hearing participants to provide additional information relevant to the review. At the conclusion of the process, USTR will publish the results of the review in a “Special 301” Report.

USTR is hereby requesting written submissions from the public concerning foreign countries that deny adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights or deny fair and equitable market access to U.S. persons who rely on intellectual property protection. USTR requests that interested parties provide the information described below in the “Public Comments” section, and identify whether a particular trading partner should be named as a Priority Foreign Country under Section 182 of the Trade Act or placed on the Priority Watch List or Watch List. Foreign governments that have been identified in previous Special 301 Reports or that are nominated for review in 2015 are considered interested parties, and are invited to respond to this request for public submissions. Interested parties, including foreign governments, wishing to submit information to be considered during the review or testify at the public hearing must adhere to the procedures and deadlines set forth below.

Dates/Deadlines: The schedule and deadlines for the 2015 Special 301 review are as follows:

Friday, February 6, 2015—Deadline for interested parties, except foreign governments, to submit written comments, notice of intent to testify at the Special 301 Public Hearing, and hearing statements.

Friday, February 13, 2015—Deadline for foreign governments to submit written comments, notice of intent to testify at the Special 301 Public Hearing, and, although not mandatory, any prepared hearing statements.

Tuesday, February 24, 2015—Public Hearing—The Special 301 Subcommittee will hold a Public Hearing for interested parties, including representatives of foreign governments, at the offices of the International Trade Commission, 500 E Street SW., Washington, DC. No later than Friday,