

than 10 years in duration, or, pursuant to § 51.24(b), the Director must submit the concession contract to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate. The Director must not award any such concession contract until 60 days after the submission. Award of these contracts may not be made without the Director's written approval. The Director may not delegate this approval except to a Deputy Director or an Associate Director. The Director may award a concession contract that is not subject to these or other special award requirements at any time after selection of the best proposal and execution of the concession contract by the offeror.

Subpart D—Non-Competitive Award of Concession Contracts

§ 51.23 May the Director extend an existing concession contract without a public solicitation?

Notwithstanding the public solicitation requirements of this part, the Director may award non-competitively an extension or extensions of an existing concession contract to the current concessioner for additional terms not to exceed three years in the aggregate, *e.g.*, the Director may award one extension with a three year term, two consecutive extensions, one with a two year term and one with a one year term, or three consecutive extensions with a term of one year each. The Director may award such extensions only if the Director determines that the extension is necessary to avoid interruption of visitor services. Before determining to award such a contract extension, the Director must take all reasonable and appropriate steps to consider alternatives to avoid an interruption of visitor services. Further, the Director must publish notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER of the proposed extension at least 30 days in advance of the award of the extension (except in emergency situations).

§ 51.24 May the Director award a temporary concession contract without a public solicitation?

(a) Notwithstanding the public solicitation requirements of this part, the Director may award non-competitively a temporary concession contract or contracts for consecutive terms not to exceed three years in the aggregate, *e.g.*, the Director may award one temporary contract with a three year term, two consecutive temporary contracts, one with a two year term and one with a one year term, or three consecutive temporary contracts with a term of one year each, to any qualified person for the conduct of particular visitor services in a park area if the Director determines that the award is necessary to avoid interruption of visitor services. Before determining to award a temporary concession contract, the Director must take all reasonable and appropriate steps to consider alternatives to avoid an interruption of visitor services. Further, the Director must publish notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER of the proposed temporary concession contract at least 30 days in advance of its award (except in emergency situations). A temporary concession contract may not be extended. A temporary concession contract may not be awarded to continue visitor services provided under an extended concession contract except as permitted by paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) Notwithstanding the last sentence of paragraph (a) of this section, the Director may award a temporary concession contract for consecutive terms not to exceed three years in the aggregate to authorize the continuing conduct of visitor services that were conducted under a concession contract that was in effect as of November 13, 1998, and that either had been extended as of that date or was due to expire by December 31, 1998, and was subsequently extended. The Director must personally approve the award of a temporary concession contract in these circumstances and may do so only if the Director determines that the award is necessary to avoid interruption of visitor services and that all reasonable alternatives to the award of the temporary concession contract have been

considered and found infeasible. The Director must publish a notice of his intention to award a temporary concession contract to a specified person under this paragraph and the reasons for the proposed award in the FEDERAL REGISTER at least 60 days before the temporary concession contract is awarded. In addition, the Director must notify the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives of the proposed award of a temporary concession contract under this paragraph at least 60 days before the temporary concession contract is awarded. A temporary concession contract awarded under the authority of this paragraph will be considered as a contract extension for purposes of determining the existence of a preferred offeror under § 51.44.

(c) A concessioner holding a temporary concession contract will not be eligible for a right of preference to a qualified concession contract which replaces a temporary contract unless the concessioner holding the temporary concession contract was determined or was eligible to be determined a preferred offeror under the extended concession contract that was replaced by the temporary concession contract under paragraph (b) of this section.

§ 51.25 Are there any other circumstances in which the Director may award a concession contract without public solicitation?

Notwithstanding the public solicitation requirements of this part, the Director may award a concession contract non-competitively to any qualified person if the Director determines both that such an award is otherwise consistent with the requirements of this part and that extraordinary circumstances exist under which compelling and equitable considerations require the award of the concession contract to a particular qualified person in the public interest. Indisputable equitable considerations must be the determinant of such circumstances. The Director must publish a notice of his intention to award a concession contract to a specified person under these circumstances and the reasons for the proposed award in the FEDERAL REG-

ISTER at least 60 days before the concession contract is awarded. In addition, the Director also must notify the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives at least 60 days before the contract is awarded. The Director must personally approve any such award and may only do so with the prior written approval of the Secretary.

Subpart E—Right of Preference to a New Concession Contract

§ 51.26 What solicitation, selection and award procedures apply when a preferred offeror exists?

The solicitation, selection and award procedures described in this part will apply to the solicitation, selection and award of contracts for which a preferred offeror exists, except as modified by this subpart, subpart F and other sections of this part related to preferred offerors and/or a right of preference.

§ 51.27 Who is a preferred offeror and what are a preferred offeror's rights to the award of a new concession contract?

(a) A preferred offeror is a concessioner that the Director has determined is eligible to exercise a right of preference to the award of a qualified new concession contract in accordance with this part.

(b) A right of preference is the right of a preferred offeror, if it submits a responsive proposal for a qualified concession contract, to match in accordance with the requirements of this part the terms and conditions of a competing proposal that the Director has determined to be the best responsive proposal.

§ 51.28 When will the Director determine whether a concessioner is a preferred offeror?

Subject to §§ 51.46 and 51.47, the Director will determine whether a concessioner is a preferred offeror in accordance with this part no later than the date of issuance of a prospectus for the applicable new concession contract.