

Dated: November 8, 1995.

Kenneth E. Roberts,

Executive Director, Advisory Committee for Studies of Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union.

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[Public Notice No. 2289]

Notice of Briefing

The Department of State announces that Under Secretary for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Joan Spero will host the first of what are anticipated to be quarterly briefings on U.S. foreign policy economic sanctions programs. The briefing will be held on Monday, December 18, 1995, from 2:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m., in State Department conference room 1912, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, D.C.

This briefing will cover the sanctions regimes overseen by the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, with a focus on Iran, Cuba, and narcotics-related programs. Country and regional desk officers will be on hand to address inquiries regarding programs operating in other countries as well.

Please Note: Persons intending to attend the December 18 briefing must announce this not later than 48 hours before the briefing, and preferably further in advance, to the Department of State by sending a fax to 202-647-3953 (Office of the Coordinator for Business Affairs). The announcement must include name, company or association name, Social Security number and date of birth. The above includes government and non-government attendees. One of the following valid photo ID's will be required for admittance: U.S. driver's license with picture, U.S. passport, U.S. government ID (company ID's are no longer accepted by Diplomatic Security). Enter from the C Street Main Lobby.

Dated: November 13, 1995.

David A. Ruth,

Senior Coordinator for Business Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of Commercial Space Transportation

[Docket OST-95-852]

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; Commercial Expendable Launch Vehicle Operations

AGENCY: Office of Commercial Space Transportation (OCST), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of intent and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of Commercial Space Transportation (OCST) intends to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) to address the environmental impact of commercial expendable launch vehicle operations. This action is necessary to update an environmental assessment the Office prepared in 1986. An EIS will encompass topics not previously addressed.

DATES: Comments must be submitted no later than December 27, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Docket Clerk, Docket OST-95-852, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street SW., Room PL-401, Washington DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Nikos Himaras, Office of Commercial Space Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. (202) 366-2929.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Commercial Space Launch Act of 1984, as recodified at 49 U.S.C. Subtitle IX—Commercial Space Transportation, ch. 701, Commercial Space Launch Activities, 49 U.S.C. §§ 70101-70119 (1994) (the Act) grants the Secretary of Transportation the authority to license and regulate commercial launches of launch vehicles and the operation of launch sites within the United States or as carried out by its citizens. The Secretary has delegated this authority to the Office of Commercial Space Transportation (OCST).

Because licensing constitutes a major Federal action, section 415.31 of OCST's licensing regulations (14 CFR ch III) states that the potential environmental impacts of licensing commercial launch activities must be considered by the Office in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq. (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, 40 C.F.R. §§ 1500-1508, and Department of Transportation Procedures for Considering

Environmental Impacts, DOT Order 5610.1C.

A programmatic environmental assessment (EA) of commercial expendable launch vehicle programs (Programmatic EA) was prepared by OCST in February 1986, and has served as a basis for licensing determinations for commercial launches to date. Commercial expendable launch vehicle operations encompass a variety of launch vehicle technologies and a number of launch sites and systems. Expendable launch vehicles are one-use launch systems utilized to carry payloads to orbit or to suborbital trajectories. They include such launch vehicles as the Black Brant, Atlas, Delta, Pegasus, and Taurus families of rockets. They employ liquid fueled engines and solid rocket motors as booster stages. They also utilize on-board guidance systems which rely on chemical batteries and power cells. Ground-controlled, flight/thrust termination systems containing explosives and powered by batteries, are also integral parts of launch vehicles. These systems are used to protect persons and property on the surface of the earth from errant launch vehicles. Launch vehicle payloads usually contain propulsion and power systems similar to those found on launch vehicles.

Several factors warrant the preparation of a programmatic EIS to replace the 1986 EA. The commercial launch industry has grown significantly since 1986, and this trend is projected to continue. New launch vehicle technologies, propulsion systems, and associated fuels and oxidizers have been introduced and are under development. Additionally, environmental regulations have been issued or amended since the publication of the Programmatic EA in 1986. Lastly, significant research discoveries have been made since 1986 concerning ozone. These developments merit the more expansive review of an EIS. This review will allow OCST to continue to evaluate commercial applications for licenses for launch activities and ensure that the information used as a basis for a license determination is current.

The programmatic EIS for commercial expendable launch vehicle operations will evaluate a broader range of launch vehicle technologies, their propulsion systems, fuels, and oxidizers. Potential environmental impacts to terrestrial, water, and particularly atmospheric environments from launches, combustion by-products, noise, and other effects will be assessed. The programmatic EIS will examine potential environmental impacts from commercial launches broadly, without