Federal Highway Administration

Federal Railroad Administration

Federal Transit Administration

Participation in the State Infrastructure Bank Pilot Program

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice extends USDOT's open invitation to States to make applications for participation in the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) Pilot Program established by the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 (the Act). This notice also sets a deadline for applications of March 8, 1996. If a State has already filed an application, it may be amended, updated, or replaced at any time prior to the deadline. The USDOT published the initial solicitation for the Pilot Program in the Federal Register on December 28, 1995 (60 FR 67159).

Application instructions were issued on January 8, 1996.

DATES: Applications for participation must be postmarked by March 8, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Cynthia Burbank, FHWA Office of Policy Development, (202) 366-9208; Mr. John Paolella, FRA Office of Policy and Program Development, (202) 366-0380; or Mr. Richard Steinmann, FTA Office of Budget and Policy, (202) 366-4060. Application requests and specific questions regarding the SIB Pilot Program may also be directed to the Divisional or Regional Offices of FHWA, FRA, or FTA.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NHS Act requires that the Secretary review the Pilot Program, review the financial condition of each SIB, and provide recommendations to Congress as to whether the program should be expanded or modified. The report to Congress is due no later than March 1, 1997. The December 28, 1995, Federal Register notice (60 FR 67159) describes SIBs and provides Pilot Program application guidance. As of February 2, 1996, the USDOT received applications and letters of intent from more than ten States. Therefore, to provide access to SIB opportunities, to maximize the effectiveness of the Pilot Program, and to ensure that Congress has for review the best examples of the States' ability to employ innovative financing techniques, the USDOT will forego the rolling approval process originally contemplated. Pursuant to Section 350 of the Act, USDOT is authorized to enter into agreements with up to ten States to establish SIBs or multistate infrastructure banks. Based upon the applications received, the USDOT will expedite a criteria-based selection of the Pilot States following the filing deadline.

The USDOT emphasizes the following selection criteria:

1. The types of assistance to be provided by the SIB (e.g., loans, credit enhancements, capital reserves for debt financing, interest rate subsidies, letters of credit);

2. Identification of projects to be advanced as a result of a Pilot designation;

3. Status of any enabling legislation, if required by a State prior to establishing a SIB;

4. How the SIB relates to other innovative financing efforts underway or planned by States;

5. The relationship of the projects proposed for the SIB to the Statewide Transportation Plan, the approved State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and any other Federally required plans;

6. How the SIB will more effectively use Federal monies; and

7. The sources of funds that will be used to capitalize the SIB (CMAQ and ISTEA demonstration funds cannot be used), including the availability of non-Federal matching funds required by Section 350(e).

8. The proposed institutional framework for the SIB;

9. Proposed mechanisms and internal procedures to monitor and/or track the flow of Federal funds to accounts in the SIB and the State's preferred reporting procedures to USDOT, given that Section 350 requires maintenance of separate accounts for highways and transit; and

10. The use of a SIB to facilitate development of intermodal or multistate projects.

To assist States in completing their applications, additional guidance on these criteria is provided in the SIB application instructions. Interested States should request a copy of these instructions. Copies of the enabling legislation (Section 350) will be provided with the instructions, which are available from the USDOT contact persons referenced in this notice, or from any Divisional or Regional Office of FHWA, FRA, or FTA. USDOT and its modal administrations may seek further clarification of SIB applications in writing or through an informal interview process with States.


Issued on: February 14, 1996.

Rodney E. Slater,
Federal Highway Administrator.

Issued on: February 14, 1996.

Jolene M. Molitoris,
Federal Railroad Administrator.

Issued on: February 14, 1996.

Gordon J. Linton,
Federal Transit Administrator.

Federal Transit Administration

Environmental Impact Statement for Transportation Improvements in the GreenBush Line Corridor in Massachusetts

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of EIS cancellation.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is cancelling its preparation of an
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for transportation improvements in the Greenbush Corridor linking the coastal communities of Braintree, Weymouth, Hingham, Cohasset, and Scituate, Massachusetts. The project sponsor, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), has announced its intention not to seek Federal financial assistance from FTA in constructing improvements in the Greenbush Corridor.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard H. Doyle, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, Region 1, Telephone (617) 494–2055.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On October 5, 1992, FTA published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for transportation improvements in the Greenbush Corridor linking the coastal communities of Braintree, Weymouth, Hingham, Cohasset, and Scituate, Massachusetts (57 FR 45864). In March 1995, FTA and the MBTA released a Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS), and published a Notice of Availability of that SDEIS on March 24, 1995 (60 FR 15565). In January 1996, however, the MBTA notified FTA that it will not seek Federal funding for transportation improvements in the Greenbush Corridor; rather, the MBTA has chosen to finance the entirety of its project with state funds. Thus, there is no longer a proposal for Federal action in the Greenbush Corridor subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, nor an FTA-assisted project subject to the requirements of 49 U.S.C. Section 303 (“Section 4(f)” of the Department of Transportation Act). Accordingly, FTA is terminating its preparation of an EIS for the Greenbush Corridor.

Issued on: February 15, 1996.

Richard H. Doyle,
Regional Administrator.


AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Request for comments on petition for decision that nonconforming 1992 through 1996 Mercedes-Benz Type 463 Long Wheel Base V–8 Gelaendewagen multi-purpose passenger vehicles (MPVs) are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This notice requests comments on a petition submitted to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for a decision that 1992 through 1996 Mercedes-Benz Type 463 Long Wheel Base V–8 Gelaendewagen MPVs that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because they have safety features that comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all such standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is March 22, 1996.

ADDRESS: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Section, Room 5109, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. (Docket hours are from 9:30 am to 4 pm.)


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) (formerly section 109(c)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (the Act)), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. § 30115 (formerly section 114 of the Act), and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards. Where there is no substantially similar U.S.-certified motor vehicle, 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(B) (formerly section 108(c)(3)(A)(i)(II) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 1397(c)(3)(A)(i)(III)) permits a nonconforming motor vehicle to be admitted into the United States if its safety features comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards based on destructive test data or such other evidence as NHTSA decides to be adequate.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR Part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the Federal Register of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the Federal Register.

Europa International, Inc. of Santa Fe, New Mexico (Registered Importer No. R–91–002) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1992 through 1996 Mercedes-Benz Type 463 Long Wheel Base V–8 Gelaendewagen MPVs are eligible for importation into the United States. Europa contends that these vehicles are eligible for importation under 49 U.S.C. § 30141(a)(1)(B) because they have safety features that comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that 1992 through 1996 Mercedes-Benz Type 463 Long Wheel Base V–8 Gelaendewagen MPVs have safety features that comply with Standard Nos. 102 Transmission Shift Lever Sequence, * * * (based on visual inspection and operation), 103 Defrosting and Defogging Systems (based on inspection), 104 Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems (based on operation), 106 Brake Hoses (based on visual inspection of certification markings), 107 Reflecting Surfaces (based on visual inspection), 113 Hood Latch Systems (based on information in owner’s manual describing operation of secondary latch mechanism), 116 Brake Fluids (based on visual inspection of certification markings and information in owner’s manual describing fluids installed at factory), 119 New Pneumatic Tires for Vehicles other than Passenger Cars (based on visual inspection of certification markings), 124 Accelerator Control Systems (based on operation and comparison to U.S.-certified vehicles), 201 Occupant Protection in Interior Impact (based on test data and certification of vehicle to European standard), 202 Head Restraints (based on Standard No. 208 test data for 1993 model year vehicle with same head restraint certification and certificate of vehicle to European standard), 204 Steering Control Rearward Displacement (based...