

meetings will include a brief introduction to the National ITS Architecture and associated standards, current thinking by DOT on possible approaches to consistency, and breakout sessions for discussion among attendees on consistency-related issues.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shelley Lynch, Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (202) 366-8028; Ronald Boenau, Federal Transit Administration, (202) 366-0195; Robert Rupert, Federal Highway Administration, (202) 366-2194. All are located at the United States Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48

Issued on: January 28, 1998

Dennis C. Judycki,

Associate Administrator for Safety and System Applications, Federal Highway Administration.

Edward L. Thomas,

Associate Administrator for Research, Demonstration and Innovation, Federal Transit Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 98-3396; Notice 1]

Orion Bus Industries Inc.; Petition for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121

Orion Bus Industries Inc. of Oriskany, New York, has petitioned for a five-month exemption from Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121 *Air Brake Systems*. The basis of the petition is that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with the standard.

This notice of receipt of the petition is published in accordance with agency regulations on the subject and does not represent any judgment by the agency about the merits of the petition.

On June 7, 1995, Western Star Truck Holdings Ltd., Canada, purchased some of the assets of Bus Industries of America. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Orion Bus Industries Ltd. of Ontario, a manufacturer of city transit buses, it established Orion Bus Industries Inc. as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Orion Bus Industries Ltd. Since 1995, "Orion Bus has been

striving to re-organize the operation, update and replace obsolete facilities and turn an insolvent organization into a first class bus manufacturing facility employing over 1,000 employees." The company manufactured 699 buses in the 12-month period preceding the filing of its application.

Paragraph S5.1.6.1(a) of Standard No. 121 requires each "single unit vehicle," including transit buses, manufactured on and after March 1, 1998, to be equipped with an antilock brake system. The company will be able to comply as of that date with buses entering production. However, it is asking relief from compliance for certain buses whose assembly will not be completed until after March 1, 1998. As it explains, these buses "are part of bus contracts which have been delayed due to the insolvency of a major part supplier." This has disrupted Orion's schedule for over 27 weeks "while a new vendor could be found, new tooling produced and the new supply of parts tested and certified to meet current in-use Safety Standards." As the buses were not designed to be equipped with antilock braking systems, their fixed-cost contracts have no provisions for the purchaser bearing the cost of modifications, and Orion would have to absorb the costs. Orion has increased its production schedule to minimize the number of buses needing an exemption. As of December 1, 1997, however, it appears to the petitioner that 148 buses will be produced on or after March 1, 1998, and not later than August 1, 1998.

Orion had a net loss of \$650,000 during its limited operations in 1995, a net income of \$1,223,000 in 1996, and a net income of \$4,696,000 in 1997. Further costs would be incurred were Orion required to conform. At a minimum, the cost to convert stock axles sets and brake assemblies to become anti-lock compliant is estimated to be \$636,740. Were Orion to complete its orders with conforming buses, the purchasers might demand that the buses for which they had already taken delivery be retrofitted to conform. This contingent liability is estimated to be \$7,000,000. Orion believes that a mixed fleet would have a detrimental effect upon its purchasers "by forcing them to carry different replacement parts, implementing different maintenance procedures and having to train maintenance personnel and drivers on how to handle the different vehicles." Because drivers sometimes change buses during their shifts, in an emergency a driver may not react appropriately as the situation demands.

Orion submitted data indicating that a temporary exemption "will have little

impact on the ability of a bus to come safely to a stop within the stopping distances specified in Table II of FMVSS 121." These data "indicate that the test vehicle [Orion VI Transit bus] met all stopping distance guidelines and stayed within a 12-foot lane width (without wheel lock)."

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date below will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: March 5, 1998.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30113; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.4.

Issued on: January 28, 1998.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of the Public Debt

Proposed Collection: Comment Request

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently the Bureau of the Public Debt within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the certificate of appointment and request for payment of savings bonds to the representative of the estate of an incompetent or minor.