

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Update on Potential Withdrawal of Tariff Concessions and Increase in Applied Duties in Response to European Union (EU) Enlargement and EU Changes to Its Rice Import Regime

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Update for the public.

BACKGROUND: In Federal Register

Notices 04-20543, dated September 10, 2004, and 04-21762, dated September 28, 2004, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative sought comments concerning a list of goods for which tariff concessions may be withdrawn and duties may be increased in the event the United States cannot reach agreement with the European Union (EU) for adequate compensation owed under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules as a result of EU enlargement and EU changes to its rice import regime. The Trade Policy Staff Committee continues to review the public comments that it has received in response to these **Federal Register** notices. As announced at a public hearing on September 24, 2004, the United States had been subject to a deadline of October 1, 2004 to notify the WTO of its rights to withdraw substantially equivalent concessions under GATT 1994 Article XXVIII:3 in relation to the issue of EU enlargement. The European Communities has subsequently extended the United States' and other interested WTO Members' rights to withdraw substantially equivalent concessions for an additional six months, until April 30, 2005. In the case of the rice import regime change, the United States and other interested WTO Members have a right to withdraw substantially equivalent concessions until March 1, 2005. The United States Government is seeking an immediate negotiated resolution of both the enlargement and the rice Margin of Preference issues, which would alleviate the need for increases in U.S. tariffs. However, we retain the right to put into force the aforementioned tariff increases if negotiations do not result in successful provision of adequate compensation. The United States must notify the World Trade Organization at least 30 days before such increases could go into effect. The United States would also provide notification to the public of the list of goods affected at least thirty days before such increases could go into effect. The public is encouraged to call Laurie Molnar, Director for European

and Mediterranean Trade Issues, Office of Europe and the Mediterranean, at (202) 395-3320, or Sharon Sydow, Director for Agriculture, Office of Agriculture, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative at (202) 395-6127 for periodic updates on the status of these issues.

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

[Docket No. BTS-2004-19380]

Request for Public Comments on 14 CFR Part 241 Reporting Requirements

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

ACTION: Request for Public Comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Department's regulations, certain air carriers are required to file BTS Form 41 Schedule B-7 (Airframe and Aircraft Engine Acquisitions and Retirements) and Form 41 Schedule B-43 (Inventory of Airframes and Aircraft Engines). Under the Department's regulations, the Department can withhold confidential business information if release of the confidential information is likely to cause substantial competitive harm to the entity that submitted the information. Based on the sensitive nature of this cost data, carriers have filed motions for confidential treatment and BTS has routinely granted confidential treatment for a ten-year period. After receiving notification that, upon the expiration of the ten-year confidentiality period, the BTS intended to release the cost data, the United Parcel Service Co. (UPS) and United Air Lines, Inc. (United) filed objections to the pending release. Both UPS and United claimed that the cost data, although ten years old, are still so sensitive that their release would result in competitive harm.

BTS is seeking public comments on the merits of the UPS and United positions and views on whether the BTS should increase the confidentiality period for certain airframe and aircraft engine cost data.

DATES: Comments must be received by December 27, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments (identified by DMS Docket Number BTS-2004-19380) through the following methods:

Web site: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.

Fax: 1-202-493-2251.

Mail: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Hand Delivery: Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Federal Rulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket number. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://dms.dot.gov>, including any personal information provided. You should know that anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time or to Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Clay Moritz, Office of Airline Information, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, Room 4125, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, 20590-0001, (202) 366-4385; clay.moritz@bts.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to 14 CFR part 241, certain air carriers are required to file BTS Form 41 Schedule B-7 (Airframe and Aircraft Engine Acquisitions and Retirements) and Form Schedule B-43 (Inventory of Airframes and Aircraft Engines). These schedules contain cost data concerning airframes and aircraft engines. Specifically, the motions for confidential treatment cover the release of data pertaining to airframe and aircraft engine acquisitions and retirements that are reported in Schedule B-7 columns 9 (Cost), 10