NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION


AGENCY: National Science Foundation (NSF).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: NSF is hereby granting a limited project-specific exemption of section 1605(b) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), Public Law 111–5, 123 Stat. 115, 303 (2009), with respect to incidental items costing $10,000 or less used in and incorporated into the Alaska Region Research Vessel (ARRV) project.

DATES: July 26, 2011.


FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jeffrey Leithead, Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support, 703–292–4595.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 1605(c) of the Recovery Act and section 176.80 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the National Science Foundation (NSF) hereby provides notice that on July 6, 2011 the NSF Chief Financial Officer, in accordance with a delegation order from the Director of the agency on 27 May 2010, granted a de minimis exemption of section 1605 of the Recovery Act (Buy American provision) with respect to each incidental item costing $10,000 or less that is used in and incorporated into the ARRV project. The basis for this exemption is section 1605(b)(1) of the Recovery Act, in that executing individual exemptions for incidental items costing $10,000 or less is not in the public interest. The total cost of incidental items requiring use of this limited exemption is expected to be less than $750,000, which represents less than 0.5% of the total Recovery Act award.

I. Background

The Recovery Act appropriated $400 million to NSF for several projects being funded by the Foundation’s Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) account. The ARRV is one of NSF’s MREFC projects. Section 1605(a) of the Recovery Act, the Buy American provision, states that none of the funds appropriated by the Act “may be used for a project for the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of a public building or public work unless all of the iron, steel, and manufactured goods used in the project are produced in the United States.”

The ARRV has been developed under a cooperative agreement awarded to the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) that began in 2007. UAF executed the shipyard contract in December 2009 and the project is currently under construction. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to stimulate economic recovery in part by funding current construction projects like the ARRV that are “shovel ready” without requiring projects to revise their standards and specifications, or to restart the bidding process.

Subsections 1605(b) and (c) of the Recovery Act authorize the head of a Federal department or agency to waive the Buy American provision if the head of the agency finds that: (1) Applying the provision would be inconsistent with the public interest; (2) the relevant goods are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities and of a satisfactory quality; or (3) the inclusion of the goods produced in the United States will increase the cost of the project by more than 25 percent. If the head of the Federal department or agency waives the Buy American provision, then the head of the department or agency is required to publish a detailed justification in the Federal Register.

Finally, section 1605(d) of the Recovery Act states that the Buy American provision must be applied in a manner consistent with the United States’ obligations under international agreements.

NSF has previously granted exemptions for purchase of the bow thruster [75 FR 9256 (March 1, 2010)], anti-roll tank control system [76 FR 184 (January 3, 2011)], weather fax [76 FR 186 (January 3, 2011)], ultrasonic antifouling system [76 FR 35920 (June 20, 2011)], and HVAC generators [76 FR 35919 (June 20, 2011)]; all of which were in excess of this $10,000 de minimus waiver and not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available commercial quantities.

II. Finding That Individual Exemptions for Incidental Items Are Not in the Public Interest

Ship construction projects typically involve the use of literally hundreds of miscellaneous, generally low-cost items that are essential for, but incidental to, the construction of the vessel. These items are permanently incorporated into the physical structure and connected to other subsystems in the ship and include such things as galley appliances, stateroom furnishings,
fixtures, and electronic equipment. For many of these incidental items, U.S. manufactured alternatives are not always readily or reasonably available. The miscellaneous character of these manufactured goods, together with their low individual cost, characterize them as items incidental to the project. 

Requiring individual exemptions for low cost, incidental items would be time prohibitive and overly burdensome for the awardee (University of Alaska, Fairbanks), subcontractor (shipyard) and for NSF. Such a de minimis exemption allows the award recipients to focus their efforts on the major manufactured goods within the ARRV project. The terms and conditions of the award still require UAF to Buy American to the extent practicable for items less than $10,000. Therefore, a limited project-specific de minimis exemption for any such incidental item costing $10,000 or less used in and incorporated into the ARRV project is justified in the public interest. The Department of Energy has issued a similar type of de minimis exemption, relating to its Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy [75 FR 35447 (June 22, 2010)]. At this phase in the ARRV project, it is estimated that only $750,000 of incidental items will require use of the de minimis exemption. To ensure proper oversight with regard to use of this exemption within the project, the agency hereby establishes an allowable ceiling of $1.5M for the application of this de minimis exemption; this represents approximately 2.5% of the total value of materials used in the vessel. (Since the previously-granted exemptions for the purchase of ARRV equipment were not granted on this de minimis basis, but instead because there was not a domestic manufacturer of the qualifying equipment, those purchases do not fall within the $1.5M ceiling for the use of this de minimis exemption.)

Issuance of this limited project-specific exemption recognizes NSF’s commitment to expeditious spending of Recovery Act dollars balanced against the need for efficient implementation of the provisions while still maintaining the Buy American requirements for manufactured goods that are greater than the de minimis amount of $10,000.

III. Exemption

On July 6, 2011, and under the authority of section 1605(b)(1) of the Public Law 111–5 and delegation order dated 27 May 2010, with respect to the Alaska Region Research Vessel Project funded by NSF, the NSF Chief Financial Officer granted a limited project exemption for any incidental item costing $10,000 or less used in and incorporated into the project. With this exemption, the agency hereby establishes a $1.5M ceiling for the total allowable value of de minimis exemptions used on this project.

Dated: July 7, 2011.

Lawrence Rudolph,
General Counsel.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC–2011–0167]

Biweekly Notice; Applications and Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses Involving No Significant Hazards Considerations

Background

Pursuant to Section 189a. (2) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC) is publishing this regular biweekly notice. The Act requires the Commission publish notice of any amendments issued, or proposed to be issued and grants the Commission the authority to issue and make immediately effective any amendment to an operating license upon a determination by the Commission that such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, notwithstanding the pendency before the Commission of a request for a hearing from any person. This biweekly notice includes all notices of amendments issued, or proposed to be issued from June 30, 2011 to July 13, 2011. The last biweekly notice was published on July 12, 2011 (76 FR 40937).

ADDRESSES: Please include Docket ID NRC–2011–0167 in the subject line of your comments. Comments submitted in writing or in electronic form will be posted on the NRC Web site and on the Federal rulemaking Web site [http://www.regulations.gov]. Because your comments will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information, the NRC cautions you against including any information in your submission that you do not want to be publicly disclosed.

The NRC requests that any party soliciting or aggregating comments received from other persons for submission to the NRC inform those persons that the NRC will not edit their comments to remove any identifying or contact information, and therefore, they should not include any information in their comments that they do not want publicly disclosed.

You may submit comments by any one of the following methods.


• Mail comments to: Chief, Rules, Regulations, and Directives Branch (RADB), Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWB–05–B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001.

• Fax comments to: RADB at 301–492–3446.

You can access publicly available documents related to this notice using the following methods:

• NRC’s Public Document Room (PDR): The public may examine and have copied, for a fee, publicly available documents at the NRC’s PDR, Room O1–F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

• NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS): Publicly available documents created or received at the NRC are accessible electronically through ADAMS in the NRC Library at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html. From this page, the public can gain entry into ADAMS, which provides text and image files of the NRC’s public documents. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC’s PDR reference staff at 1–800–397–4209, 301–415–4737, or by e-mail to pdr.resource@nrc.gov.

• Federal Rulemaking Web site: Public comments and supporting materials related to this notice can be found at http://www.regulations.gov by searching on Docket ID: NRC–2011–0167.

Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the following amendment requests involve no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission’s regulations in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) Involve a significant increase in the probability or