

optional “peg” rate (13 CFR 120.214) on a quarterly basis. This rate is a weighted average cost of money to the government for maturities similar to the average SBA direct loan. This rate may be used as a base rate for guaranteed fluctuating interest rate SBA loans. This rate will be 2.50 percent for the October–December quarter of FY 2018.

Pursuant to 13 CFR 120.921(b), the maximum legal interest rate for any third party lender’s commercial loan which funds any portion of the cost of a 504 project (see 13 CFR 120.801) shall be 6% over the New York Prime rate or, if that exceeds the maximum interest rate permitted by the constitution or laws of a given State, the maximum interest rate will be the rate permitted by the constitution or laws of the given State.

**Dianna L. Seaborn,**

*Director, Office of Financial Assistance.*

[FR Doc. 2017–21200 Filed 10–2–17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8025–01–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

#### Advisory Board—Notice of Public Meetings

**AGENCY:** Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC); DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the public meeting via conference call of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation Advisory Board.

**DATES:** The public meeting will be held on (all times Central):

- Monday, October 30, 2017, from 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held in person and via conference call at the Global Waters Center, 247 West Freshwater Way (Suite 529), Milwaukee, WI 53204.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Wayne Williams, Chief of Staff, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590; 202–366–0091

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Pursuant to Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92–463; 5 U.S.C. App. I), notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC). The agenda for this meeting will be as follows:

**October 30, 2017, From 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.**

1. Opening Remarks
2. Consideration of Minutes of Past Meeting
3. Quarterly Report
4. Old and New Business
5. Closing Discussion
6. Adjournment.

#### Public Participation

Attendance at the meeting is open to the interested public but limited to the space available. With the approval of the Administrator, members of the public may present oral statements at the meeting. Persons wishing further information should contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, not later than Monday, October 23, 2017. Any member of the public may present a written statement to the Advisory Board at any time.

**Carrie Lavigne,**

*Chief Counsel, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.*

[FR Doc. 2017–21155 Filed 10–2–17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. DOT–OST–2017–0118]

#### Notice of Rights and Protections Available Under the Federal Antidiscrimination and Whistleblower Protection Laws

**AGENCY:** Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** No FEAR Act Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice implements Title II of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act of 2002). It is the annual obligation for Federal agencies to notify all employees, former employees, and applicants for Federal employment of the rights and protections available to them under the Federal Anti-discrimination and Whistleblower Protection Laws.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Yvette Rivera, Associate Director of the Equity and Access Division (S–32), Departmental Office of Civil Rights, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W78–306, Washington, DC 20590, 202–366–5131 or by email at [Yvette.Rivera@dot.gov](mailto:Yvette.Rivera@dot.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Electronic Access

You may retrieve this document online through the Federal Document

Management System at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Electronic retrieval instructions are available under the help section of the Web site.

#### No FEAR Act Notice

On May 15, 2002, Congress enacted the “Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002,” now recognized as the No FEAR Act (Pub. L. 107–174). One purpose of the Act is to “require that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.” (Pub. L. 107–174, Summary). In support of this purpose, Congress found that “agencies cannot be run effectively if those agencies practice or tolerate discrimination” (Pub. L. 107–174, Title I, General Provisions, section 101(1)). The Act also requires the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to provide this Notice to all USDOT employees, former USDOT employees, and applicants for USDOT employment. This Notice informs such individuals of the rights and protections available under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.

#### Antidiscrimination Laws

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee or applicant with respect to the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, genetic information, or political affiliation. One or more of the following statutes prohibit discrimination on these bases: 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(1), 29 U.S.C. 631, 29 U.S.C. 633a, 29 U.S.C. 206(d), 29 U.S.C. 791, 42 U.S.C. 2000e–16 and 2000ff.

If you believe you were a victim of unlawful discrimination on the bases of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, and/or disability, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action to try and resolve the matter informally. This must be done before filing a formal complaint of discrimination with USDOT (See, e.g., 29 CFR part 1614). If you believe you were a victim of unlawful discrimination based on age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. As an alternative to filing a complaint pursuant to 29 CFR part 1614, you can file a civil action in

a United States district court under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, against the head of an alleged discriminating agency after giving the EEOC not less than a 30 day notice of the intent to file such action. You may file such notice in writing with the EEOC via mail at P.O. Box 77960, Washington, DC 20013, the EEOC Web site <https://www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm>, personal delivery, or facsimile within 180 days of the occurrence of the alleged unlawful practice.

If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a written discrimination complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC). Form OSC-11 is available online at the OSC Web site <http://www.osc.gov>, under the tab to file a complaint. Additionally, you can download the form from <http://www.osc.gov/Pages/Resources-OSCFORMS.aspx>. Complete Form OSC-11 and mail it to the Complaints Examining Unit, U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505. You also have the option to call the Complaints Examining Unit at (800) 872-9855 for additional assistance. In the alternative (or in some cases, in addition), you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through the USDOT administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

If you are alleging compensation discrimination pursuant to the Equal Pay Act, and wish to pursue your allegations through the administrative process, you must contact an EEO counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action as such complaints are processed under EEOC's regulations at 29 CFR part 1614.

Alternatively, you may file a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction within two years, or if the violation is willful, three years of the date of the alleged violation, regardless of whether you pursued any administrative complaint processing. The filing of a complaint or appeal pursuant to 29 CFR part 1614 shall not toll the time for filing a civil action.

#### **Whistleblower Protection Laws**

A USDOT employee with authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action must not use that authority to take, or fail to take, or threaten to take, or fail to take a personnel action against an employee or applicant because of a disclosure of information by that individual that is reasonably believed to evidence violations of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, unless the disclosure of such information is specifically prohibited by law and such information is specifically required by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

Retaliation against a USDOT employee or applicant for making a protected disclosure is prohibited (5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8)). If you believe you are a victim of whistleblower retaliation, you may file a written complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505 using Form OSC-11. Alternatively, you may file online through the OSC Web site at <http://www.osc.gov>.

#### **Disciplinary Actions**

Under existing laws, USDOT retains the right, where appropriate, to discipline a USDOT employee who

engages in conduct that is inconsistent with Federal Antidiscrimination and Whistleblower Protection laws up to and including removal from Federal service. If OSC initiates an investigation under 5 U.S.C. 1214, USDOT must seek approval from the Special Counsel to discipline employees for, among other activities, engaging in prohibited retaliation (5 U.S.C. 1214). Nothing in the No FEAR Act alters existing laws, or permits an agency to take unfounded disciplinary action against a USDOT employee, or to violate the procedural rights of a USDOT employee accused of discrimination.

#### **Additional Information**

For more information regarding the No FEAR Act regulations, refer to 5 CFR part 724, as well as the appropriate office(s) within your agency (e.g., EEO/civil rights offices, human resources offices, or legal offices). You can find additional information regarding Federal antidiscrimination, whistleblower protection, and retaliation laws at the EEOC Web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov> and the OSC Web site at <http://www.osc.gov>.

#### **Existing Rights Unchanged**

Pursuant to section 205 of the No FEAR Act, neither the Act nor this notice creates, expands, or reduces any rights otherwise available to any employee, former employee, or applicant under the laws of the United States, including the provisions of law specified in 5 U.S.C. 2302(d).

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 2, 2017.

**Charles E. James, Sr.,**

*Director, Departmental Office of Civil Rights,  
U.S. Department of Transportation.*

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