

Public Law 97-177
97th Congress

An Act

To require the Federal Government to pay interest on overdue payments, and for other purposes.

May 21, 1982
[S. 1131]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Prompt
Payment Act.

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Prompt Payment Act".

31 USC 1801
note.

INTEREST PENALTIES ON LATE PAYMENTS

SEC. 2. (a)(1) In accordance with regulations prescribed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, each Federal agency which acquires property or services from a business concern but which does not make payment for each such complete delivered item of property or service by the required payment date shall pay an interest penalty to such business concern in accordance with this section on the amount of the payment which is due.

31 USC 1801.

(2) Such regulations—

(A) shall specify that the required payment date shall be—

(i) the date on which payment is due under the terms of the contract for the provision of such property or service; or

(ii) thirty days after receipt of a proper invoice for the amount of the payment due, if a specific date on which payment is due is not established by contract;

(B)(i) in the case of any acquisition of meat or of a meat food product, as defined in section 2(a)(3) of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 182(3)), shall specify a required payment date which is not later than seven days after the date of delivery of such meat or meat food product; and

(ii) in the case of any acquisition of a perishable agricultural commodity, as defined in section 1(4) of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, 1930 (7 U.S.C. 499a(4)), shall specify a required payment date consistent with requirements imposed pursuant to such Act;

(C) shall specify separate required payment dates for contracts under which property or services are provided in a series of partial executions or deliveries, to the extent that such contract provides for separate payment for such partial execution or delivery; and

(D) shall require that, within fifteen days after the date on which any invoice is received, Federal agencies notify the business concern of any defect or impropriety in such invoice which would prevent the running of the time period specified in subparagraph (A)(ii).

(b)(1) Interest penalties on amounts due to a business concern under this Act shall be paid to the business concern for the period

beginning on the day after the required payment date and ending on the date on which payment of the amount due is made, except that no interest penalty shall be paid if payment for the complete delivered item of property or service concerned is made on or before (A) the third day after the required payment date, in the case of meat or a meat food product described in subsection (a)(2)(B)(i); (B) the fifth day after the required payment date, in the case of an agricultural commodity described in subsection (a)(2)(B)(ii); or (C) the fifteenth day after the required payment date, in the case of any other item. Interest shall be computed at the rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury for interest payments under section 12 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 611). The Secretary of the Treasury shall publish each such rate in the Federal Register.

Interest rate
computation.

Publication in
Federal Register.

Unpaid interest
penalty.

(2) Any amount of an interest penalty which remains unpaid at the end of any thirty-day period shall be added to the principle amount of the debt and thereafter interest penalties shall accrue on such added amount.

(c) This section does not authorize the appropriation of additional funds for the payment of interest penalties required by this section. A Federal agency shall pay any interest penalties required by this section out of funds made available for the administration or operation of the program for which the penalty was incurred.

Interest penalty
payments.

(d)(1) Any recipient of a grant from a Federal agency may provide in a contract for acquisition of property or services from a business concern for the payment of interest penalties on amounts overdue under such contract, except that—

(A) in no case shall an obligation to pay such interest penalties be construed to be an obligation of the United States, and

(B) any payment of such interest penalties shall not be made from funds provided to the grant recipient by a Federal agency, nor shall any non-Federal funds expended for such interest penalties be counted toward any matching requirement applicable to that grant.

(2) Such interest penalty payments shall be made under such terms and conditions as agreed to by the grant recipient and the business concern, consistent with the grant recipient's usual business practices and applicable State and local law.

LIMITATION ON DISCOUNT PAYMENTS

31 USC 1802.

SEC. 3. (a) If a business concern offers a Federal agency a discount from the amount otherwise due under a contract for property or services in exchange for payment within a specified period of time, the Federal agency may make payment in an amount equal to the discounted price only if payment is made within such specified period of time.

(b) Each agency which violates subsection (a) shall pay an interest penalty on any amount which remains unpaid in violation of such subsection. Such interest penalty shall accrue on such unpaid amount in accordance with the regulations prescribed pursuant to section 2, except that the required payment date with respect to such unpaid amount shall be the last day of the specified period of time described in subsection (a).

CLAIMS; RELATION TO OTHER LAW

SEC. 4. (a)(1) Claims for interest penalties which a Federal agency has failed to pay in accordance with the requirements of section 2 or 3 of this Act may be filed under section 6 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 605).

31 USC 1803.

(2) Interest penalties under this Act shall not continue to accrue (A) after the filing of a claim for such penalties under the Contract Disputes Act of 1978, or (B) for more than one year.

41 USC 601 note.

(3) Paragraph (2) shall not be construed to preclude the accrual of interest pursuant to section 12 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 611) after interest penalties have ceased accruing under this Act, and interest pursuant to such section may accrue on both any unpaid contract payment and on the unpaid interest penalty required by this Act.

(b) Except as provided in section 3 with respect to disputes concerning discounts, this Act shall not be construed to require interest penalties on payments which are not made by the required payment date by reason of a dispute between a Federal agency and a business concern over the amount of that payment or other allegations concerning compliance with a contract. Claims concerning any such dispute, and any interest which may be payable with respect to the period while the dispute is being resolved, shall be subject to the Contract Disputes Act of 1978.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

SEC. 5. (a) Each Federal agency shall file with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a detailed report on any interest penalty payments made under this Act during the preceding fiscal year.

Report, filing with OMB.
31 USC 1804.

(b) Such report shall include the number, amounts, and frequency of interest penalty payments, and the reasons such payments were not avoided by prompt payment, and shall be delivered to the Director within sixty days after the conclusion of each fiscal year.

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(c) The Director shall submit to the Committee on Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Small Business of the Senate and to the Committee on Government Operations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives within one hundred and twenty days after the conclusion of each fiscal year a report on Federal agency compliance with the requirements of this Act. Such report shall include a summary of the report submitted by each Federal agency under subsection (b) and an analysis of the progress made in reducing interest penalty payments by that agency from previous years.

Federal agency compliance; submittal to congressional committees.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 6. For the purposes of this Act—

31 USC 1805.

(1) the term "Federal agency" has the same meaning as the term "agency" in section 551(1) of title 5, United States Code, but also includes any entity (A) which is operated exclusively as an instrumentality of such an agency for the purpose of administering one or more programs of that agency, and (B)

which is so identified for this purpose by the head of such agency;

(2) the term "business concern" means any person engaged in a trade or business and nonprofit entities operating as contractors;

(3) an invoice shall be considered a "proper invoice" when it contains or is accompanied by such substantiating documentation (A) as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may require by regulation, and (B) as the Federal agency involved may require by regulation or contract;

(4) an invoice shall be deemed to have been received by an agency on the later of—

(A) the date on which the agency's designated payment office or finance center actually receives a proper invoice; or

(B) the date on which such agency accepts the property or service concerned;

(5) a payment shall be considered made on the date on which a check for such payment is dated; and

(6) a contract for the rental of real or personal property is a contract for the acquisition of that property.

EFFECTIVE DATE

31 USC 1801
note.

SEC. 7. (a) This Act applies to the acquisition of property or services on or after the beginning of the first calendar quarter which begins more than ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act.

31 USC 1801
note.

(b) The provisions of this Act requiring the promulgation of regulations shall be effective upon enactment, and such regulations shall be promulgated not later than ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act.

31 USC 1806.

(c) The provisions of this Act shall apply to the Tennessee Valley Authority, but any regulations promulgated under the authority of this Act shall not be applicable to the Tennessee Valley Authority, which shall be solely responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act with respect to its contracts.

Approved May 21, 1982.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1131 (H.R. 4709):

HOUSE REPORT No. 97-461 accompanying H.R. 4709 (Comm. on Government Operations).

SENATE REPORT No. 97-302 (Comm. on Governmental Affairs).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 127 (1981): Dec. 15, considered and passed Senate.

Vol. 128 (1982): Mar. 23, H.R. 4709 considered and passed House; proceedings vacated and S. 1131, amended, passed in lieu.

May 11, Senate concurred in House amendments.