

for the Gibson East Transportation Corridor Study.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed transportation project in Bernalillo County, New Mexico, in accordance with 23 CFR part 771.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reuben S. Thomas, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, 604 W. San Mateo Rd., Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505, Telephone: (505) 820-2022.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and the City of Albuquerque Public Works Department, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to improve Gibson Boulevard in Bernalillo County, New Mexico. The proposed action involves the improvement of Gibson Boulevard beginning at Interstate 25 and extending eastward to the Juan Tabo Boulevard-Interstate 40 interchange for a total corridor distance of about 12.9 kilometers or 8.0 miles.

The proposed action addresses the need to relieve increased traffic congestion in the southeast quadrant of Albuquerque with a safe and efficient transportation system that also serves major employment centers including the Albuquerque International Airport, Kirtland Air Force Base, the Kirtland Air Force Base/Veterans Administration Medical Center, and the Lovelace Medical Center.

Alternatives under consideration include (1) the No Build Alternative; (2) the Arterial Alternative; (3) The Expressway Alternative; (4) the Expressway/Arterial Alternative, and (5) the Transit/High-Occupancy Vehicle Alternative.

The No Build Alternative would maintain the existing condition of Gibson Boulevard as a six-lane principal arterial with varying degrees of access control from the Interstate 25/Gibson Boulevard interchange eastward to its existing terminus at Louisiana Boulevard, a distance of approximately 6.4 kilometers or 4.0 miles.

The Arterial Alternative would reconstruct major street intersections, make some minor roadway improvements on Gibson Boulevard from the Interstate 25/Gibson Boulevard interchange to Louisiana Boulevard, and close several existing roadway medians. It would also extend Gibson Boulevard eastward from Louisiana Boulevard to

the Juan Tabo Boulevard/Central Avenue intersection.

The Expressway/Arterial Alternative would upgrade Gibson Boulevard to a high-capacity, high speed, limited access principal arterial with full access limited to major intersections approximately one-half mile apart for its eight mile length.

The Expressway/Arterial Alternative would upgrade Gibson Boulevard to a high-capacity, high-speed, limited-access principal arterial with full access limited to major street intersections approximately one-half mile apart along seven of its eight mile length. For the remaining one-mile segment, between San Mateo Boulevard and Louisiana Boulevard, the Arterial Alternative standards would apply.

The Transit/High-Occupancy Vehicle Alternative would upgrade Gibson Boulevard from Interstate 25 to the Juan Tabo Boulevard/Interstate 40 interchange to a transit/high-occupancy vehicle corridor.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed an interest or are known to have an interest in this proposal. A series of public meetings will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico beginning in February, 1997. In addition, a public hearing will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing. No formal scoping meeting is planned at this time.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues and impacts identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities supply to this program)

Issued on: February 12, 1997.

Reuben S. Thomas,

Division Administrator, Santa Fe, NM.

[FR Doc. 97-5338 Filed 3-4-97; 8:45 am]

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Maritime Administration

[Docket No. M-030]

Information Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD's) intentions to request extension of approval for three years of a currently approved information collection.

DATES: Comments should be submitted on or before May 5, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Lippold, Division of Capital Assets Management, Office of Ship Financing, Maritime Administration, MAR-533, Room 8122, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone (202) 366-5744 or FAX (202) 366-3954. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: Capital Construction Fund and Exhibits.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved information collection.

OMB Control Number: 2133-0027.

Form Number: No Maritime Administration form is required; only a format specified in 46 CFR Part 390, "Capital Construction Fund".

Expiration Date of Approval: April 30, 1997.

Summary of Collection of Information: The collection consists of application for a Capital Construction Fund agreement under section 607 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 as amended, and annual submissions of appropriate schedules and exhibits. The Capital Construction Fund is a tax deferred ship construction fund that was created to assist owners and operators of U.S.-flag vessels in accumulating the large amount of capital necessary for the modernization and expansion of the U.S. merchant marine. The program encourages construction, reconstruction, or acquisition of vessels through the deferment of Federal income taxes on certain deposits of money or property placed into a CCF.

Need and Use of the Information: The collected information is used by the Maritime Administration to determine an applicant's eligibility to enter into a CCF Agreement.

Description of Respondents: U.S. citizens which own or lease one or more

eligible vessels and that have a program to provide for the acquisition, construction or reconstruction of a qualified vessel as defined in section 607(k)(2) of the Act.

Annual Responses: 130.

Annual Burden: 15.4 hours average per year per respondent.

Comments: Send all comments regarding this information collection to Joel C. Richard, Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, MAR-120, Room 7210, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Send comments regarding whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Dated: February 27, 1997.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-5346 Filed 3-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. 96-116, Notice 2]

Capacity of Texas, Inc.; Grant of Application for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121

Collins Industries of Hutchinson, Kansas, on behalf of its subsidiary, Capacity of Texas, Inc., of Longview, Texas, applied for a temporary exemption from paragraph S5.1.6 of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121 *Air Brake Systems*. The basis of the application was that compliance will cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried to comply with the standard in good faith.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on November 15, 1996, and an opportunity afforded for comment (61 FR 58604).

Paragraph S5.1.6 (which includes S5.1.6.1-S5.1.6.3) of Standard No. 121 requires in pertinent part that each truck tractor manufactured on and after March 1, 1997, be equipped with an antilock brake system. Capacity of Texas ("Capacity") asked that one of its truck tractor models be exempted for three months from the provisions of S5.1.6 that will apply to it effective March 1, 1997. Capacity manufactures the Trailer Jockey "Model TJ-5000 (Off Highway)"

truck tractor. Terming it a "yard tractor", Capacity stated that "this type of truck is designed to operate in a freight yard moving trailers from one terminal entrance to another * * * geared to limited speed [45 mph maximum] and to provide start-up torque for repeated stopping and starting." The tractors generally operate at 25 mph.

Because these terminal tractors do not appear manufactured primarily for use on the public roads, ordinarily NHTSA would not consider them to be "motor vehicles" to which Standard No. 121 applies. However, Capacity is currently working to fill its third contract with the U.S. Postal Service. Unlike the other two contracts, the present Postal Service contract specifies that the truck tractors be certified to comply with all Federal motor vehicle safety standards applicable to on-road truck tractors, even though Capacity estimates that the tractors will spend "approximately 5% or less of their life in operation on the public highways." Capacity's contract is for 210 vehicles, to be produced between September 1996 and June 1997, and it estimated that the final 60 under the order will be completed by the end of May 1997. It thus seeks an exemption from March 1, 1997, to June 1, 1997, from the antilock brake requirements for the 60 tractors.

One option that it examined is acceleration of its production schedule so that manufacture of all vehicles could be completed by March 1, 1997. However, this would require an increase in production rates "by at least 33% two months prior to the March 1, 1997 date." The work in part would have to be performed by newly hired and trained employees, increasing its overtime costs by 100%. It estimates that total costs would be greater by far than its net income for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1996. In addition, it would have to lessen its efforts to fill other orders, with a consequent loss of business. This means that, at the completion of the order as of March 1, 1997, it would have to lay off 50% of its work force until more orders were received and an orderly production schedule established. For these reasons, acceleration of the production schedule would cause it substantial economic hardship.

A further option is to delay production of the 60 vehicles until compliance with Standard No. 121 is achieved. Capacity stated that "it will be possible to delay delivery of other customer trucks until testing of ABS truck systems is complete." However, according to Capacity, delay for conformance is not acceptable to the

Postal Service because it would result in a fleet of dissimilar vehicles requiring different spare parts. As Capacity further argued, identical vehicles are desired by the Postal Service because "all drivers in the fleet can be trained to the same operating procedures" and "Fleet maintenance people will be working on these trucks and will be able to maintain all 270 using the same procedures." Even if a delay were acceptable to the Postal Service, Capacity would have to absorb the increase in costs since "the price is fixed by contract and no upward price relief is available."

In the year preceding the filing of its petition, Capacity produced and certified 47 vehicles for on-road use other than those produced under the postal contract. It also produced less than 500 off-road vehicles. In the same period, its parent corporation, Collins, Inc., manufactured less than 2,000 school buses and less than 2,000 ambulance conversions. Capacity's net income has declined over the past three fiscal years and, in its fiscal year ending October 31, 1996, is far less than \$1,000,000.

Capacity argued that a temporary exemption would be in the public interest because the vehicles are produced for the U.S. Postal Service. It submitted that an exemption is also consistent with motor vehicle safety because "NHTSA is using a staggered effectivity date for addition of antilock brakes to tractors, trucks, and buses." It pointed out that "[t]here will be many vehicles built during the 3 months of this petition that are built under the old standard * * *. The only reason tractors are involved is because they got the first effectivity date instead of buses."

One comment was received. Carter Hart of Corsicana, Texas, does not like anti-lock brakes and commented that "[t]he company requesting the exemption from this regulation should not need one because it is the regulation which is flawed." NHTSA considers this comment irrelevant to the merits of the application.

Capacity's application presents a situation that differs from the usual hardship case where a small manufacturer's resources may be insufficient to achieve compliance by the effective date of a standard or to test for compliance, or where the small volume manufacturer is experiencing difficulties in obtaining conforming parts in a timely fashion. Capacity and its parent do not have net and cumulative losses in the three years before the application was filed; however, its net income has declined