

those, 659 have fewer than 500 employees and qualify as small entities. The remaining 57 firms have 500 or more employees; however, we are unable to determine how many of those have fewer than 1,000 employees and therefore also qualify as small entities under the SBA definition.

11. This proposal will begin the process of requiring television manufacturers to include blocking technology in their television receivers and to ensure that any ratings information that is provided with video programming is transmitted to the television receiver intact and without disruption by any broadcast, cable television, or other television program distribution services.

D. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping and Other Compliance Requirements

12. The Commission's rules require television receivers to be verified for compliance with applicable FCC technical requirements. See 47 CFR 15.101, 15.117, and 2.951, *et seq.* Documentation concerning the verification must be kept by the manufacturer or importer. The rules ultimately adopted in this proceeding will require that television receivers comply with industry-developed standards for blocking display of video programming based on program ratings. However, verification testing regarding program blocking is not necessary because compliance with the industry-developed standards, and the associated Commission rules, can be determined easily during the television receiver design process. The Commission may, of course, ask manufacturers and importers to document upon occasion how a particular television receiver complies with the program blocking requirements.

E. Significant Alternatives to Proposed Rules Which Minimize Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities and Accomplish Stated Objectives

13. Section 330(c)(4) of the Act directs the Commission to consider the existence of appropriate alternative blocking technologies and to amend its rules to permit, as an alternative to the ratings-based approach, use of a technology that: (1) "Enables parents to block programming based on identifying programs without ratings"; (2) "is available to consumers at a cost which is comparable" to the cost of ratings-based technology; and (3) "will allow parents to block a broad range of programs on a multichannel system as effectively and as easily" as ratings-based technology. At this time, we are

not aware of any such alternative blocking technologies. Accordingly, we invite comment regarding the existence of such alternate blocking technologies and whether it would be appropriate to permit them at this time in lieu of ratings-based blocking technology. In order to evaluate possible alternative blocking technologies, we solicit information regarding the cost of any alternative blocking technology as well as the cost of implementing ratings-based technology pursuant to EIA-608.

14. Section 303(x) of the Act makes it clear that the program blocking requirements were intended to apply to any "apparatus designed to receive television signals" that has a picture screen of 13 inches or larger. We believe that the program blocking requirements we are proposing should apply to any television receiver (including personal computers) meeting the screen size requirements, regardless of whether it is designed to receive video programming that is distributed only through cable television systems, MDS, DBS, or by some other distribution system.

F. Federal Rules That May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rules

15. None.

List of Subjects

47 CFR Part 15

Communications equipment, Computer technology.

47 CFR Part 73

Communications equipment, Television.

47 CFR Part 74

Communications equipment, Television.

47 CFR Part 76

Cable television.

Federal Communications Commission.

William F. Caton,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-26700 Filed 10-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

RIN 1018-AE31

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reopening of Comment Period on Proposed Endangered Status for the Illinois Cave Amphipod

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides notice that the comment period is reopened on the proposal to list the Illinois cave amphipod (*Gammarus acherondytes*) as endangered, pursuant to Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The Service is reopening the comment period to allow members of the public additional time to submit comments on this proposal.

DATES: The reopened comment period on the proposal will close on December 8, 1997. Comments must be received by the Service on or before that date in order to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments and materials concerning the proposal should be sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Field Office, 4469 48th Avenue Court, Rock Island, Illinois. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard C. Nelson, Field Supervisor, Illinois Field Office (see ADDRESSES section) (telephone 309/793-5800; facsimile 309/793-5804).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On July 28, 1997, the Service proposed to add the Illinois cave amphipod (amphipod) to the list of endangered and threatened animals (62 CFR 40319). The amphipod is historically known from six underground cave streams in St. Clair and Monroe Counties in southwestern Illinois. Recent searches for the amphipod indicate that it may exist in only three cave streams in Monroe County, all within a 10-mile radius of Waterloo, Illinois. The cause of the amphipod's decline in geographic range and in the number of populations is believed to be deteriorating water quality in the cave streams which it

inhabits. Surface pollutants can readily enter the cave stream systems by way of sinkholes that directly connect the land surface to the underground cave systems. Agricultural chemicals and effluent from improperly installed or maintained residential septic and sewage systems likely are the primary pollutants affecting subsurface water quality and the health of the amphipod.

The comment period for the proposal ended on September 26, 1997. During that comment period the Service received requests for an extension of the comment period from the Illinois Farm

Bureau Federation, the St. Clair County Farm Bureau Federation, the Growmark Corporation, and Congressman Jerry F. Costello. The Service recognizes that seasonal agricultural activities may have made it difficult for some interested and potentially affected parties to prepare and submit timely comments on the proposal. Therefore, the Service is reopening the comment period for another 60 days to provide all interested parties a reasonable opportunity to submit comments.

Author: The primary author of this notice is Ronald L. Refsnider, U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056 (612/725-3536 ext. 241 or fax 612/725-3526).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1361-1407; 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544; 16 U.S.C. 4201-4245; Pub. L. 99-625, 100 Stat. 3500; unless otherwise noted.

Dated: October 1, 1997.

John A. Blankenship,

Assistant Regional Director, Region 3, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

[FR Doc. 97-26791 Filed 10-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P