also ought to create jobs and sales for ''suppliers and sales people at auto dealerships. In addition, ''sale of these vehicles [ought to] generate retail sales taxes of approximately $1,162.50 per unit,'' and these revenues would be lost with the denial of the Application. An exemption would be consistent with the objectives of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301 as it would make available to the public a nostalgic vehicle that complies with all but two Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the application described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and the notice number, and be submitted to: Central Docket Management Facility, room Pl–401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated below will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket (from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at the above address both before and after that date. Comments may also be viewed on the internet at web site dms.dot.gov. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the application will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: June 11, 1998.

(49 U.S.C. 30113; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50. and 501.8)

Issued on May 6, 1998.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 98–12597 Filed 5–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA 98–3396; Notice 2]

Orion Bus Industries Inc.; Grant of Application for Temporary Exemption From Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121

This notice grants the application by Orion Bus Industries Inc. of Oriskany, New York, for a five-month exemption from Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121 *Air Brake Systems*. The basis of the application was that compliance would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried in good faith to comply with the standard.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on February 3, 1998, and an opportunity afforded for comment (62 FR 5604).

On June 7, 1995, Western Star Truck Holdings Ltd., Canada, purchased some of the assets of Bus Industries of America. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Orion Bus Industries Ltd. of Ontario, a manufacturer of city transit buses, Western Star established Orion Bus Industries Inc. (''Orion Bus'') as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Orion Bus Industries Ltd. Since 1995, ''Orion Bus has been striving to re-organize the operation, update and replace obsolete facilities and turn an insolvent organization into a first class bus manufacturing facility employing over 1,000 employees.'' Orion Bus manufactured 699 buses in the 12-month period preceding the filing of its application.

Paragraph S5.1.6.1(a) of Standard No. 121 requires each ''single unit vehicle,'' including transit buses, manufactured on and after March 1, 1998, to be equipped with an antilock brake system. The company will be able to comply as of that date with buses entering production. However, it sought relief from compliance for certain Transit VI buses whose assembly will not be completed until after March 1, 1998. As it explained, these buses ''are part of bus contracts which have been delayed due to the insolvency of a major part supplier.'' This has disrupted Orion Bus's schedule for over 27 weeks ''while a new vendor could be found, new tooling produced and the new supply of parts tested and certified to meet current in-use Safety Standards.'' As the buses were not designed to be equipped with antilock braking systems, their fixed-cost contracts have no provisions for the purchaser bearing the cost of modifications, and Orion Bus would have to absorb the costs. Orion Bus increased its production schedule to minimize the number of buses needing an exemption. As of December 1, 1997, however, it appeared to Orion Bus that 148 Transit VI buses would be produced on or after March 1, 1998, and not later than August 1, 1998.

Orion Bus had a net loss of $650,000 during its limited operations in 1995, a net income of $1,223,000 in 1996, and a net income of $4,696,000 in 1997. Further costs would be incurred were Orion Bus required to conform. At a minimum, the cost to convert stock axles sets and brake assemblies to become anti-lock compliant is estimated to be $636,740. Were Orion Bus to complete its orders with conforming buses, the purchasers might demand that the buses for which they had already taken delivery be retrofitted to conform. This contingent liability is estimated to be $7,000,000. Orion Bus believes that a mixed fleet would have a detrimental effect upon its purchasers ''by forcing them to carry different replacement parts, implementing different maintenance procedures and having to train maintenance personnel and drivers on how to handle the different vehicles.'' Because drivers sometimes change buses during their shifts, in an emergency a driver may not react appropriately as the situation demands. Thus, it is in the public interest to grant the application.

Orion Bus submitted data indicating that a temporary exemption ''will have little impact on the ability of a bus to come safely to a stop within the stopping distances specified in Table II of FMVSS 121.'' These data ''indicate that the test vehicle [Orion VI Transit bus] met all stopping distance guidelines and stayed within a 12-foot lane width (without wheel lock).''

One comment was received in response to the notice. Gillig Corporation, a manufacturer of ''heavy duty buses, primarily for transit operation,'' opposed the application. It believes that ''more than enough notice [was provided] to plan for a business like change over of an important safety standard improvement,'' commenting that the rest of the industry also had ''schedule changes and increased vehicle costs [which] we had to incorporate into our business plans.'' Gillig further commented that ''rationalizing the impact by citing best effort, dry road stopping is not the intent of anti-lock systems. Anti-lock is designed to perform in adverse conditions and panic stops. Fleet mixing is destined to occur.'' Finally, Gillig said that it was ''unaware of precedent that Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards can be postponed due to a manufacturer's economic difficulties.''

In fact, there is a factual precedent for the application by Orion Bus, and it also involved compliance with Standard No. 121. Last year, the agency exempted one truck tractor model manufactured by Capacity of Texas, Inc., from compliance with the antilock brake requirements of Standard No. 121 for a period of three months (62 FR 10110). Capacity's contract with the U.S. Postal Service called for it to deliver 210 vehicles between September 1996 and June 1997. In applying for relief, it estimated that it could not complete the final 60 truck tractors by March 1, 1997 without an uneconomic increase in production rates which would entail the hiring and training of new personnel, and without diverting attention from other orders in process. In support of its application, it cited its customer's desire to have 210 identical vehicles so that all drivers in the fleet could be trained in the same operating procedure and maintenance employees in the same maintenance procedures. The Postal Service also did not wish to have a fleet of dissimilar vehicles requiring different spare parts. It had not proven feasible to complete the order before the antilock effective date.

Orion Bus's inability to complete its contract on schedule was due to ''bus contracts which have been delayed due to the insolvency of a major part supplier.'' This disrupted its schedule for over 27 weeks while a new vendor could be found. As Orion Bus has asked for a 20-week exemption, it appears that the applicant would otherwise have completed the order for 210 buses almost two months before the effective date of the antilock provisions of Standard No. 121. NHTSA deems the ''insolvency of a major part supplier'' as something more than a ''schedule change,'' with which other bus manufacturers had to contend, as submitted by Gillig. Orion Bus's other buses will be manufactured to conform to the new requirements of the standard effective March 1, 1998. In NHTSA's view, Orion Bus has demonstrated sufficiently that it has tried in good faith to comply with the antilock requirements of the standard.

Orion Bus has also made a sustainable hardship argument. Although its cumulative net income for the three fiscal years of its existence is somewhat more than $5,000,000, a denial would force it to suspend production of the buses until it could bring them into conformity, and would present the possibility that its customers might demand that the buses already delivered to them be retrofitted to conform, a contingent liability estimated to be $7,000,000. Orion Bus advances the same arguments relating to the inadvisability of mixed fleets as were presented by Capacity and which NHTSA found compelling in granting Capacity's application.

With respect to the necessary finding that an exemption is consistent with considerations of motor vehicle safety, Orion Bus has stated that its Transit VI buses will comply with the stopping distances required by S5.3.1 for buses equipped with antilock. Gillig emphasizes that this argument neglects the purpose of antilock, ''to perform in adverse conditions and panic stops.'' The safety of buses is of great concern to NHTSA because these vehicles are operated on a daily basis, carrying hundreds of passengers. But transit buses, unlike intercity buses, are operated on city streets where speed is limited and where they may not even reach these limits in the start-and-halt driving between stops. The likelihood of the need for antilock is less likely to arise in urban environments under these operating conditions. The continued availability of mass transit is in the public interest as is the preservation of the orderly flow of commerce.

In consideration of the foregoing, it is hereby found that to require Orion Bus to comply immediately with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 121 would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has attempted in good faith to comply with the standard, and that an exemption would be in the public interest and consistent with the objectives of motor vehicle safety. Accordingly, Orion Bus Industries, Inc., is hereby granted NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. 98–4, expiring September 1, 1998, for the production of not more than 150 Orion VI Transit buses to be exempt from S5.1.6 of 49 CFR 571.121 Standard No. 121 *Air Brake Systems.*

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30113; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued: May 6, 1998.

Ricardo Martinez,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98–12596 Filed 5–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of the Public Debt

Proposed Collection: Comment Request

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104–13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A). Currently the Bureau of the Public Debt within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the Direct Deposit Sign Up Form.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before July 14, 1998, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Bureau of the Public Debt, Vicki S. Thorpe, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106–1328.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the form and instructions should be directed to Vicki S. Thorpe, Bureau of the Public Debt, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106–1328, (304) 480–6553.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Direct Deposit Sign Up Form.

OMB Number: 1535–0128.

Form Number: PD F 5396.

Abstract: The information is requested to process payment data to a financial institution.

Current Actions: None.

Type of Review: Extension.

Affected Public: Individuals.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 20,000.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 10 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 3,400.

Request for Comments

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: May 6, 1998.

Vicki S. Thorpe,

Manager, Graphics, Printing and Records Branch.

[FR Doc. 98–12523 Filed 5–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810–39–P