

having or expected to have a theft rate above the median rate for all new passenger motor vehicles (cars, MPVs, and light-duty trucks—6000 lbs GVWR and below) sold in the United States, as well as with major component parts that are interchangeable with those having high-theft rate.

The specific lines and parts to be identified are to be selected by agreement between the manufacturer and the agency. If there is a disagreement of the selection, the statute states that the agency shall select such lines and parts, after notice to the manufacturer and an opportunity for written comment. The procedures, contained in Part 542 (1) and (2) will be applied to those lines introduced before or after the 1997 model year (MY).

Estimated Annual Burden: 1,600 hours.

(2) *Title:* Petitions for Exemption from the Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard, 49 CFR Part 543.

OMB Control Number: 2127-0542.

Type Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit.

Abstract: 49 U.S.C. Chapter 331 requires the Secretary of Transportation to promulgate a theft prevention standard to provide for the identification of certain motor vehicles and their major replacement parts to impede motor vehicle theft. 49 U.S.C. section 33106 provides for an exemption to this identification process by petitions from manufacturers who equip covered vehicles with standard original equipment anti theft devices, which the Secretary determines are likely to be as effective in reducing or deterring theft as the identification system.

Estimated Annual Burden: 192 hours.

ADDRESSES: Send comments, within 30 days, to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725-17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503, Attention NHTSA Desk Officer. Comments are invited on: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 22, 1998.

Phillip A. Leach,

Clearance Officer, United States Department of Transportation

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements; Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act 1995 (44 USC Chapter 35), this notice announces that the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected burden. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on February 17, 1998 [63 FR 7849-7850].

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 27, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Arlene Kennedy, Office of Information Services, (202) 366-9458, Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Title: Certification of Enforcement of the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax.

OMB Number: 2125-0541.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Form(s): N/A

Affected Public: State highway agencies.

Abstract: Title 23, United States Code, Section 141(d), provides that a State's apportionment of funds under 23 U.S.C. 104(b)(5) shall be reduced in an amount up to 25 percent of the amount to be apportioned during any fiscal year beginning after September 30, 1984, if vehicles subject to the Federal heavy vehicle use tax are lawfully registered in

the State without having presented proof of payment of the tax. The annual certification of collection of the heavy vehicle use tax submitted by each State serves as the primary means of determining State compliance with 23 U.S.C. 141(d) by the FHWA. Under the rulemaking authority granted to the Secretary of Transportation by 23 U.S.C. 315, the FHWA has determined that an annual certification of compliance by each State is the least obtrusive means of administering the provisions of the legislative mandate.

Evidence of compliance with 23 U.S.C. 141(d) is comprised of two elements: reporting and recordkeeping. The reporting element consists of a simple certification submitted to FHWA on an annual basis by the State's Governor or designated official. The recordkeeping element consists of a one-year retention of Schedule 1, Form 2290, by the States (or other suitable alternative provided by regulation).

Compliance reviews are periodically conducted by FHWA to determine if the certification is adequate to ensure effective administration of 23 U.S.C. 141(d).

The certification requirement is the critical factor in establishing a manageable and reasonable procedure for determining State compliance with the statute. Without annual certification and supporting records, determinations of compliance would involve frequent reviews of State registration procedures and practices and would clearly be an obtrusive Federal presence in State programs.

Estimated Annual Burden Hours: 612.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725-17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503, Attention FHWA Desk Officer. Comments are invited on: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 22, 1998.

Vanester M. Williams,

Clearance Officer, United States Department of Transportation

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Broad Agency Announcement: Funds Availability for Research Projects and Technology Advancements Under the Next Generation High-Speed Rail Program

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of funds availability: Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for research projects and technology advancements under the next generation high-speed rail program.

Introduction

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is soliciting pre-proposal concept papers for various research projects, technology advancements and/or demonstrations directed at enhancing the deployment of high-speed rail service in the United States.

Technologies most likely to enhance the deployment of high-speed rail service in the U.S. are those which will—(a) enhance the revenue-generating capability of high-speed operations; (b) bring about capital cost reductions and economy in producing equipment and facilities; (c) reduce operating costs of high-speed rail service; (d) improve the reliability of equipment and infrastructure components; (e) improve safety; and/or (f) enhance the social benefits and/or environmental aspects of high speed rail.

Eligible Participants

This is an unrestricted solicitation. Any responsible source may submit a pre-proposal concept paper for consideration including, but not limited to, states or local governments, or organizations of state or local governments, institutions of higher education, hospitals or other non-profit organizations, private individuals, corporations, businesses or commercial organizations, except that any business owned in whole or in part by the Federal Government is not eligible. Although businesses owned in whole or in part by the Federal Government are not eligible for funding under the Program, they may contract with eligible

participants. Cooperative arrangements (e.g., joint ventures, limited partnerships, teaming arrangements, or collaboration and consortium arrangements) are permitted and encouraged. Small, Small Disadvantaged (SD), and Women-Owned (WO) Business Concerns, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Institutions (MIs) are encouraged to submit pre-proposal concept papers on their own and/or in collaboration with others. However, no portion of this BAA will be set aside exclusively for Small, SD, or WO Business Concerns, or for HBCU and MIs. Attention: Minority, Women-Owned and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs)! The Department of Transportation (DOT), Short-Term Lending Program (STLP) offers working capital financing in the form of lines of credit to finance accounts receivable for transportation related contracts. Maximum line of credit is \$500,000 with interest at the prime rate. For further information call (800) 532-1169. Internet address: <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov>.

Exchanges and Points of Contact

Exchanges of information between interested parties and the Government, prior to submission of pre-proposal concept papers, are strongly encouraged. Such informal exchanges may provide would-be offerors with preliminary information on the Government's level of interest in prospective works or projects or on the availability of funds. Any exchanges of information must be consistent with procurement integrity requirements of section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423, as amended) (see Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 3.104). For technical inquiries, interested parties may contact the BAA primary technical point of contact, Mr. Robert McCown (Tel: 202/632-3250, Fax: 202/632-3854), or one of the other, secondary technical points of contact identified in Appendix A of the BAA 98-01 Pre-Proposal Preparation Package (BAA 98-01 Package), available from the FRA. All non-technical inquiries should be directed to the Grants/Contracting Officer, Mr. Thomas Riddle (Tel: 202/632-3391, Fax: 202/632-3846). Please note that FRA anticipates changing its telephone service on or about July 10, 1998. New telephone numbers will be assigned during this change over. For the first 30 days after the change over, there will be a automatic bridge/link in which the service provider will furnish callers with the new number of the party they are trying to reach when an old

[replaced] number is dialed. After 30 days, a caller who dials an old number will be routed to the DOT operator for assistance/new number, or the caller may dial the DOT information line direct at 202/366-4000. As of the date this announcement/notice was submitted for publication, the following numbers have been tentatively assigned for the points of contact identified above, for *usage on or after July 10, 1998*: Mr. McCown—Tel: 202/493-6350, RDV-30 Fax: 202/493-6333. Mr. Riddle—Tel: 202/493-6149.

BAA Time Line

BAA 98-01 is being published in both the Commerce Business Daily (CBD) and the **Federal Register** (FR) in June 1998. (Note: BAA 98-01 is a single broad agency announcement of the FRA, that is being advertised and published in these two different media to reach a broad base of prospective applicants. The description of BAA 98-01 may differ slightly in form between the two publications, but each will be substantially the same as the other in all material respects.) FRA will accept pre-proposal concept paper submissions, inquiries and requests for the BAA 98-01 Package under BAA 98-01, immediately upon its announcement and appearance in either the CBD, or FR, or June 22, 1998, whichever single date/event occurs first. However, to allow interested parties adequate time to prepare pre-proposal concept papers, FRA will not begin its technical evaluations before July 22, 1998. Unless BAA 98-01 is superceded or canceled, FRA will continue to accept concept submissions, inquiries and package requests, through April 30, 1999; however, fiscal year 1999 (FY 99) awards are subject to the availability of FY 99 appropriations or the continued availability of unobligated prior no-year funds. Although the BAA is open for an extended period, interested parties would be well advised to submit proposals as early as possible.

Funding Authority and Related Information

Funds for this program are authorized in the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act 1998, Public Law 105-66 (October 27, 1997). FRA will make available up to \$4.3 million for awards under the BAA during fiscal year 1998 for research project and technology advancements in areas of research interest to the FRA, that are evaluated favorably and determined by the FRA to be consistent with the objectives of this BAA and of interest to the Government, and for which adequate funding exist. Awards