

merchandise exports to Mexico increased by 90 percent, with imports from Mexico increasing by 137 percent. As is to be expected from such a large trading relationship, the United States does continue to have concerns about Mexico's trade practices in some areas. The most important of these concern Mexico's enforcement of its intellectual property laws, telecommunications policy, and market access for high fructose corn syrup.

Mexico has committed to implement and enforce advanced levels of intellectual property protection and has just enacted new legislation to this effect. However, as noted in USTR's Special 301 Report issued today, piracy and counterfeiting remain major problems, with current enforcement action inadequate to deter piracy. Mexico has been added to the Special 301 Watch List.

Regarding telecommunications, the United States is concerned that ongoing regulatory processes are non-transparent and potentially ineffective. USTR's Section 1377 Report, released on March 30, expressed doubts about Mexico's implementation of its commitments under the WTO agreement with respect to international services and interconnection rates. The Mexican government has said it will review its international service and interconnection/universal service regulations in 1999. USTR will conduct an out-of-cycle examination by July 30 regarding the progress of Mexico's ongoing regulatory process, and expects that Mexico will respond favorably to the requests from all the new entrants to permit International Simple Resale (ISR) immediately. At that time USTR will take appropriate action including, if warranted, the initiation of WTO dispute settlement proceedings, to assure that new competitors in the market are treated fairly.

The United States continues to raise its concerns regarding the Mexican Government's application of antidumping measures on U.S. exports of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). A dispute settlement panel was established by the World Trade Organization in November 1998 and hearings were held in April 1999. A decision is expected late this year. U.S. exporters are also challenging Mexico's measure under the Chapter 19 provisions of the NAFTA and last year filed a Section 301 petition with USTR, alleging that the policies and practices of the Government of Mexico are unreasonable and deny fair and equitable market opportunities for U.S. exporters. USTR accepted the petition for review on May 15, 1998.

#### 9. Middle East

Building upon our Free Trade Agreement with Israel, the United States has inaugurated a program that aims to bolster the peace process, while advancing American interests. Starting with a framework of bilateral trade and investment consultations in the region and a newly inaugurated industrial zones program, the United States will help the Middle Eastern countries work toward a shared goal of increased intra-regional trade. Most recently, the USTR expanded the first Jordan-Israel Qualifying Industrial Zone, designated another, and completed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with Jordan.

#### 10. Western Hemisphere

The Miami and Santiago Summits of the Americas called on us to complete work on a Free Trade Area of the Americas no later than the year 2005. This year, also in accordance with Summit directions, the United States intends to achieve concrete progress toward the FTAA in the work of our nine Negotiating Groups (market access, agriculture, services, investment, government procurement, intellectual property, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, competition policy, and dispute settlement) and through business facilitation measures. In addition, the FTAA has initiated a private sector-public sector experts group on electronic commerce to advise the ministers on how electronic commerce can benefit the countries of this hemisphere, especially in the context of the FTAA negotiations. The ministers also have established a government committee on the participation of civil society, which has solicited the views of the different sectors of society concerning the FTAA and will analyze them for the consideration by the ministers at the next FTAA ministerial in Toronto in November 1999.

At the same time, the Clinton Administration will seek approval from Congress for an expanded and improved Caribbean Basin Initiative with duty-free treatment for products currently excluded from the program. The Administration seeks to use the program to promote the adoption by beneficiary countries of sound trade and investment policy reforms that will prepare them for the obligations and responsibilities of the FTAA.

**Demetrios J. Marantis,**

*Assistant General Counsel, Section 301 Committee.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Amtrak Reform Council; Notice of Seminar

**AGENCY:** Amtrak Reform Council.

**ACTION:** Notice seminar.

**SUMMARY:** As provided in Section 203 of the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997, the Amtrak Reform Council (ARC) gives notice of a seminar on Amtrak. The seminar will deal with how and why Amtrak was established, Amtrak's current status and future plans. For comparative purposes, the program will also include international performance statistics and examples of how other countries operate and finance their intercity passenger trains. Amtrak and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics will open the seminar with a statistical profile of passenger travel in the U.S. In addition, the Council has invited speakers from the U.S. railroad industry, rail labor organizations, the World Bank, the consulting industry, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

**DATES:** The seminar is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** The seminar will be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Crystal City, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Alexandria, VA (703-413-5500). The seminar is open to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis. Persons in need of special arrangements should contact the person listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Deirdre O'Sullivan, Amtrak Reform Council, Room 7105, JM-ARC, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590, or by telephone at (202) 366-0591; FAX: 202-493-2061.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The ARC was created by the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997 (ARAA), as an independent commission, to evaluate Amtrak's performance and to make recommendations to Amtrak for achieving further cost containment, productivity improvements, and financial reforms. In addition, the ARAA requires that the ARC monitor cost savings resulting from work rules established under new agreements between Amtrak and its labor unions; that the ARC provide an annual report to Congress that includes an assessment of Amtrak's progress on the resolution of productivity issues; and that after two years the ARC has the authority to determine whether Amtrak can meet certain financial goals specified under

the ARAA and, if not, to notify the President and the Congress.

The ARAA provides that the ARC consist of eleven members, including the Secretary of Transportation and ten others nominated by the President or Congressional leaders. Each member is to serve a five year term.

Issued in Washington, D.C. April 29, 1999.

**Thomas A. Till,**

*Executive Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### Notice of Intent To Request Renewal From the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of Current Public Collections of Information

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the FAA invites public comment on 7 currently approved public information collections which will be submitted to OMB for renewal.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before July 6, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on any of these collections may be mailed or delivered to the FAA at the following address: Ms. Judith Street, Room 612, Federal Aviation Administration, Standards and Information Division, APF-100, 800 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20591.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Judith Street at the above address or on (202) 267-9895.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FAA solicits comments on any of the current collections of information in order to evaluate the necessity of the collection, the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden, the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected, and possible ways to minimize the burden of the collection.

Following are short synopses of the 7 currently approved public information collection activities, which will be submitted to OMB for review and renewal:

1. 2120-0008, Certification and Operations: Air Carriers and Operations of Large Aircraft—FAR 121. The respondents are an estimated 140 air carriers and commercial operators certificated under FAR 121. The estimated total annual burden is

850,000 hours annually. Abstract: Each operation which seeks to obtain, or is in possession of an air carrier operating certificate must comply with the requirements of FAR Part 121 in order to maintain data which is used to determine if the air carrier is operating in accordance with minimum safety standards.

2. 2120-505, Indirect Air Carrier Security, 14 CFR Part 109. The respondents are an estimated 2500 indirect air carriers with security programs. The estimated total annual burden is 650 hours. Abstract: part 109 sets forth procedures to be used by indirect air carriers in carrying out their responsibilities involving the protection of persons and property against acts of criminal violence, aircraft piracy, and terrorist activities in the forwarding of package cargo by passenger aircraft.

3. 2120-0536, Security Programs for Foreign Air Carriers. The respondents are an estimated 170 foreign air carriers/governments. The estimated total annual burden is 28,000 hours. Abstract: Each foreign air carrier landing or taking off in the United States is to submit a security program for the Administrator's acceptance to ensure adequate security measures are being implemented by those foreign air carriers.

4. 2120-0587, Aviator Safety Studies. The respondents are an estimated 4000 certified pilots. The burden is an estimated total of 8000 hours. Abstract: In order to conduct effective research on the contribution of pilots to aircraft accidents, data are required on the normative distribution of various pilot attributes and their association with accident involvement.

5. 2120-0597, Application for Employment with the Federal Aviation Administration. The respondents are an estimated 75,000 people who may apply for employment with the Federal Aviation Administration. The estimated burden hours is 75,000 hours annually. Abstract: Under the provisions of Pub. L. 104-50, the FAA has been given the authority to develop and implement its own personnel system. This application will be used in our efforts to automate and centralize the application, evaluation and referral of applicants for employment.

6. 2120-0600, Training and Qualification Requirements for Check Airmen and Flight Instructors. The respondents are an estimated 3000 experienced pilots who would otherwise qualify as flight instructors or check airmen, but who are not medically eligible to hold the requisite medical certificate to perform flight instructor or check airmen functions in a simulator. The estimated annual

burden is 15 hours. Abstract: This rule established separate requirements for check airmen who check only in flight simulators and flight instructors who instruct only in flight simulators. This information will be used by the FAA to determine and assure check airmen and instructors maintain the high qualification standards required to perform their safety functions.

7. 2120-0601, Financial Responsibility for Licensed Launch Activities. Respondents are an estimated 7 licensees authorized to conduct licensed launch activities. The estimated annual burden is 1800 hours. Abstract: The required information will be used to determine if licensees have complied with financial responsibility requirements, including maximum probable loss determination, as set forth in regulations and in license orders issued by the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 3, 1999.

**Steve Hopkins,**

*Manager, Standards and Information Division, APF-100.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### Notice of Intent To Rule on Application (99-01-C-00-ACY) To Impose Only and Impose and Use a Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) at Atlantic City International Airport, Atlantic City, NJ

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to rule on application.

**SUMMARY:** The FAA proposes to rule and invites public comment on the application to impose only and impose and use a PFC at Atlantic City International Airport under the provisions of the Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990 (Title IX of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990) (Pub. L. 101-508) and part 158 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 158).

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before June 7, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on this application may be mailed or delivered in triplicate to the FAA at the following address: Mr. Dan Vornea, Project Manager, New York Airports District Office, 600 Old Country Road, Suite 446, Garden City, N.Y. 11530.