

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Coast Guard****DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS****38 CFR Part 21**

RIN 2900-AJ88

Increase in Rates Payable Under the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve

AGENCIES: Department of Defense, Department of Transportation (Coast Guard), and Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: By statute, the monthly rates of basic educational assistance payable to reservists under the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve must be adjusted each fiscal year. In accordance with the statutory formula, the regulations governing rates of basic educational assistance payable under the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve for fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000) are changed to show a 1.6% increase in these rates.

DATES:

Effective Date: October 4, 2000.

Applicability Date: The changes in rates are applied retroactively to conform to statutory requirements. For more information concerning the dates of application, see the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

William G. Susling, Jr., Assistant Director for Policy and Program Development, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration (202) 273-7187.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the formula mandated by 10 U.S.C. 16131(b) for fiscal year 2000, the rates of basic educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve payable to students pursuing a program of education full time, three-quarter time, and half time must be increased by 1.6%, which is the percentage by which the total of the monthly Consumer Price Index-W for July 1, 1998, through June 30, 1999, exceeds the total of the monthly Consumer Price Index-W for July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998.

10 U.S.C. 16131(b) requires that full-time, three-quarter time, and half-time rates be increased as noted above. In addition, 10 U.S.C. 16131(d) requires that monthly rates payable to reservists in apprenticeship or other on-the-job

training must be set at a given percentage of the full-time rate. Hence, there is a 1.6% raise for such training as well.

10 U.S.C. 16131(b) also requires that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pay reservists training less than half time at an appropriately reduced rate. Since payment for less than half-time training became available under the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve in fiscal year 1990, VA has paid less than half-time students at 25% of the full-time rate. Changes are made consistent with the authority and formula described in this paragraph.

Nonsubstantive changes also are made for the purpose of clarity.

The changes set forth in this final rule are effective from the date of publication, but the changes in rates are applied from October 1, 1999, in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions discussed above.

Substantive changes made by this final rule merely reflect statutory requirements and adjustments made based on previously established formulas. Accordingly, there is a basis for dispensing with prior notice and comment and delayed effective date provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552 and 553.

The Secretary of Defense, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs hereby certify that this final rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as they are defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612. This final rule directly affects only individuals and does not directly affect small entities. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), this final rule, therefore, is exempt from the initial and final regulatory flexibility analyses requirements of sections 603 and 604.

Executive Order 12866

The Office of Management and Budget has reviewed this final rule under Executive Order 12866.

Unfunded Mandates

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act requires (in section 202) that agencies prepare an assessment of anticipated costs and benefits before developing any rule that may result in an expenditure by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100 million or more in any given year. This rule would have no consequential effect on State, local, or tribal governments.

There is no Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for the program affected by this final rule.

List of Subjects in 38 CFR Part 21

Administrative practice and procedure, Armed forces, Civil rights, Claims, Colleges and universities, Conflict of interests, Defense Department, Education, Employment, Grant programs-education, Grant programs-veterans, Health programs, Loan programs-education, Loan programs-veterans, Manpower training programs, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Schools, Travel and transportation expenses, Veterans, Vocational education, Vocational rehabilitation.

Approved: March 24, 2000.

Togo D. West, Jr.,

Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Approved: April 28, 2000.

Charles L. Cragin,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

Approved: April 25, 2000

F.L. Ames,

U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Human Resources.

For the reasons set out above, 38 CFR part 21, subpart L, is amended as set forth below.

PART 21—VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EDUCATION**Subpart L—Educational Assistance for Members of the Selected Reserve**

1. The authority citation for part 21, subpart L continues to read as follows:

Authority: 10 U.S.C. ch. 1606; 38 U.S.C. 501(a), ch. 36, unless otherwise noted.

2. Section 21.7636 is amended by:

A. In paragraph (a)(3), removing “September 30, 1998” and adding, in its place, “September 30, 1999”; and removing “October 1, 1999” and adding, in its place, “October 1, 2000”.

B. Revising paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2) introductory text, and (a)(2)(i).

§ 21.7636 Rates of payment.

(a) * * *

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or in * 21.7639, the monthly rate of basic educational assistance payable for training that occurs after September 30, 1999, and before October 1, 2000, to a reservist pursuing a program of education is the amount stated in this table:

Training	Monthly rate
Full time	\$255.00
¾ time	191.00
½ time	127.00
¼ time	63.75

(2) The monthly rate of basic educational assistance payable to a reservist for apprenticeship or other on-the-job training full time that occurs after September 30, 1999, and before October 1, 2000, is the rate stated in this table:

Training period	Monthly rate
First six months of pursuit of training	\$191.25
Second six months of pursuit of training	140.25
Remaining pursuit of training	89.25

* * * * *

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Parts 52 and 81

[WA-71-7146a; FRL-6879-6]

Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes: Washington

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves the Thurston County, Washington PM-10 area maintenance plan and redesignation request from nonattainment to attainment as revisions to the Washington State Implementation Plan. PM-10 air pollution is suspended particulate matter with a diameter less than or equal to a nominal ten micrometers.

DATES: This direct final rule is effective on December 4, 2000 without further notice, unless EPA receives adverse comment by November 3, 2000. If adverse comment is received, EPA will publish a timely withdrawal of the direct final rule in the **Federal Register** and inform the public that the rule will not take effect.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to: Debra Suzuki, EPA, Office of Air Quality (OAQ-107), 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98101.

Copies of the State's request and other information supporting this action are available for inspection during normal business hours at the following locations: EPA, Office of Air Quality (OAQ-107), 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98101, and State of

Washington Department of Ecology, 300 Desmond Drive, PO Box 47600, Olympia, Washington 98504-7600.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Downey, Office of Air Quality (OAQ-107), EPA, Seattle, Washington, (206) 553-0682.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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I. Summary of Action

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves the Thurston County PM-10 area maintenance plan and redesignation request from

nonattainment to attainment as revisions to the Washington State Implementation Plan.

EPA is publishing this rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial submittal and anticipates no adverse comments. However, in the proposed rules section of this **Federal Register** publication, EPA is publishing a separate document that will serve as the proposal to approve the SIP revision should adverse comments be filed. This rule will be effective December 4, 2000, without further notice unless the Agency receives adverse comments by November 3, 2000.

If the EPA receives adverse comments, then EPA will publish a **Federal Register** document withdrawing the final rule and informing the public that the rule will not take effect. All public comments received will then be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on the proposed rule. The EPA will not institute a second comment period. Parties interested in commenting should do so at this time. If no such comments are received, the public is advised that this rule will be effective on December 4, 2000, and no further action will be taken on the proposed rule.

II. Supplementary Information

1. What Is the Purpose of This Rulemaking?

Today's rulemaking announces two actions being taken by EPA related to air quality in the State of Washington. These actions are taken at the request of the Governor of Washington in response to Clean Air Act (Act) requirements and EPA regulations.

First, EPA approves the PM-10 maintenance plan for the Thurston County nonattainment area and incorporates this plan into the Washington State Implementation Plan (SIP).

Second, EPA redesignates Thurston County from nonattainment to attainment for PM-10. This redesignation is based on validated monitoring data and projections of ambient concentrations made in the maintenance plan's demonstration. EPA believes the area will continue to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM-10 for at least ten years beyond this redesignation, as required by the Act.

2. What Is a State Implementation Plan?

The Clean Air Act requires States to keep ambient concentrations of specific air pollutants below certain thresholds to provide an adequate margin of safety