

which may be in assigned hazardous materials shipments.

**Recommended Action:** In recognition of the need to assure safety, FRA recommends that railroads, manufacturers, and car owners make every attempt to adhere to the *Industry Safety Action Plan* developed by AAR and expedite wherever possible the handling of potentially defective NCM bolsters. FRA realizes that the industry has been delayed to some extent in meeting the time schedules detailed in the Safety Action Plan due to the short supply of replacement bolsters and the desire to minimize operating impacts. With this in mind, FRA expects owners of hazardous materials tank cars equipped with these defective bolsters to have the cars shipped once the cars become empty and NOT RELOAD until defective bolsters have been removed and once defective bolsters have been removed to so notify the AAR.

Failure of the rail industry to voluntarily take action consistent with the AAR *Industry Safety Action Plan* may result in FRA pursuing other corrective measures to enforce public safety under its rail safety authority. FRA may modify this Safety Advisory 2003-03, issue additional safety advisories, or take other appropriate action necessary to ensure the highest level of safety on the nation's railroads.

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 18, 2003.

**George A. Gavalla,**

*Associate Administrator for Safety.*

[FR Doc. 03-29338 Filed 11-21-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Program Grants

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of fiscal year 2004 funds; solicitation of grant applications.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the availability of funds in fiscal year (FY) 2004 for the Over-the-Road Bus (OTRB) Accessibility Program, authorized by Section 3038 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The OTRB Accessibility Program makes funds available to private operators of over-the-road buses to finance the incremental capital and training costs of complying with DOT's

over-the-road bus accessibility final rule, published in a **Federal Register** notice on September 24, 1998. The OTRB Accessibility Program calls for national solicitation of applications, with grantees to be selected on a competitive basis. Federal transit funds are available to intercity fixed-route providers and other OTRB providers at up to 90 percent of the project cost.

FTA expects that in FY 2004, \$5.25 million will be appropriated for intercity fixed-route service providers and \$1.7 million will be appropriated for other over-the-road bus service providers. As of the date of this announcement, TEA-21 has been extended through February 29, 2004, and the FY 2004 funding for FTA programs has not yet been appropriated by Congress. This announcement describes application procedures for the OTRB Accessibility Program and the procedures FTA will use to determine which projects it will fund when the status of FY 2004 funding is resolved.

This announcement is available on the Internet on the FTA website at: <http://www.fta.dot.gov>. FTA will announce final selections on the website and in the **Federal Register**. A synopsis of this announcement will be posted in the FIND module of the government-wide electronic grants website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

**DATES:** Complete applications for OTRB Accessibility Program grants must be submitted to the appropriate FTA regional office (see Appendix A) by the close of business February 2, 2004.

The appropriate FTA regional office is that office which serves the state in which an applicant's headquarters office is located. FTA will announce grant selections in summer 2004, or when FY 2004 funds are fully available.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** Contact the appropriate FTA Regional Administrator (Appendix B) for application-specific information and issues. For general program information, contact Blenda Younger, Office of Program Management, (202) 366-2053, e-mail: [blenda.younger@fta.dot.gov](mailto:blenda.younger@fta.dot.gov). A TDD is available at 1-800-877-8339 (TDD/FIRS).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Table of Contents

- I. General Program Information
- II. Guidelines for Preparing Grant Applications
- III. Grant Application Review Process
  - Appendix A OTRB Accessibility Program Application
  - Appendix B FTA Regional Offices

## I. General Program Information

### A. Authority

The program is authorized under Section 3038 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Although FY 2004 funds have not yet been appropriated as of the date of this notice, FTA is issuing the solicitation notice now to get the application cycle started.

### B. Background

Over-the-road buses are used in intercity fixed-route service as well as other services, such as commuter, charter, and tour bus services. These services are an important element of the U.S. transportation system. TEA-21 authorized FTA's Over-the-road Bus Accessibility Program to assist over-the-road bus operators in complying with the Department's Over-the-road Bus Accessibility rule, "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities" (49 CFR part 37) published in a **Federal Register** notice on September 24, 1998.

#### Summary of DOT's Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Rule

**Deadlines for Acquiring Accessible Vehicles.** Under the over-the-road bus accessibility rule, all new buses obtained by large (Class I carriers, *i.e.*, those with gross annual operating revenues of \$5.3 million or more), fixed-route carriers after October 30, 2000 must be accessible, with wheelchair lifts and tie-downs that allow passengers to ride in their own wheelchairs. The rule requires 50 percent of the fixed-route carriers' fleets to be accessible by 2006, and 100 percent of the vehicles in their fleets to be accessible by 2012. The buses acquired by small (gross operating revenues of less than \$5.3 million annually) fixed-route providers after October 29, 2001 also are required to be lift-equipped, although they do not have a deadline for total fleet accessibility. Small providers also can provide equivalent service in lieu of obtaining accessible buses. Starting in 2001, charter and tour companies have to provide service in an accessible bus on 48 hours' advance notice. Fixed-route companies must also provide this kind of service on an interim basis until their fleets are completely accessible.

**Deadlines for Delivering Accessible Service.** The rules for delivering accessible motorcoach service went into effect October 29, 2001 for large fixed-route, charter, tour and other demand-responsive motorcoach companies. The rules went into effect for small operators on October 28, 2002. After these dates, companies must provide service in an accessible coach to a passenger who

requests it and gives 48 hours' advance notice. Small companies may provide equivalent service, instead of acquiring accessible coaches. This equivalent service may be provided in an alternate vehicle (e.g., a van), provided that the service allows passengers to travel in their own wheelchairs.

Specifications describing the design features that an over-the-road bus must have to be readily accessible to and usable by persons who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids required by the "Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Transportation Vehicles: Over-the-Road Buses" rule (36 CFR part 1192) were published in another **Federal Register** notice on September 28, 1998.

#### *C. Scope*

Improving mobility and shaping America's future by ensuring that the transportation system is accessible, integrated, and efficient, and offers flexibility of choices is a key strategic goal of the Department of Transportation. Over-the-road Bus Accessibility projects will improve mobility for individuals with disabilities by providing financial assistance to help make vehicles accessible and provide training to ensure that drivers and others understand how to use accessibility features as well as how to treat patrons with disabilities.

#### *D. Eligible Applicants*

Grants will be made directly to operators of over-the-road buses. Intercity, fixed-route over-the-road bus service providers may apply for the \$5.25 million that FTA expects will be available to intercity fixed-route providers in FY 2004. Other over-the-road bus service providers, including operators of local fixed-route service, commuter service, and charter or tour service may apply for the \$1.7 million expected to be available in FY 2004 for these providers. OTRB operators who provide intercity, fixed-route service and another type of service, such as commuter, charter or tour, may apply for both categories of funds with a single application. Private for-profit operators of over-the-road buses are eligible to be direct applicants for this program. This is a departure from most other FTA programs for which the direct applicant must be a state or local public body.

#### *E. Vehicle and Service Definitions*

An "over-the-road bus" is a bus characterized by an elevated passenger deck located over a baggage compartment.

Intercity, fixed-route over-the-road bus service is regularly scheduled bus service for the general public, using an over-the-road bus that: operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity or connecting one or more rural communities with an urban area not in close proximity; has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers; and makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points.

Other over-the-road bus service means any other transportation using over-the-road buses, including local fixed-route service, commuter service, and charter or tour service (including tour or excursion service that includes features in addition to bus transportation such as meals, lodging, admission to points of interest or special attractions). While some commuter service may also serve the needs of some intercity fixed-route passengers, the statute includes commuter service in the definition of "other" service. Commuter service providers should apply for these funds, even though the services designed to meet the needs of commuters may also provide service to intercity fixed-route passengers on an incidental basis. If a service provider can document that more than 50 percent of its passengers are using the service as intercity fixed-route service, the provider may apply for the funds designated for intercity fixed-route operators.

#### *F. Eligible Projects*

Projects to finance the incremental capital and training costs of complying with DOT's over-the-road bus accessibility rule (49 CFR part 37) are eligible for funding. Incremental capital costs eligible for funding include adding lifts, tie-downs, moveable seats, doors and all labor costs associated with work on the vehicle needed to make vehicles accessible. Retrofitting vehicles with such accessibility components is also an eligible expense. Please see Buy America section for further determination of eligibility.

FTA may award funds for costs already incurred by the applicants. Any new wheelchair accessible vehicles delivered since June 8, 1998, the date that the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century was effective, are eligible for funding under the program. Vehicles of any age that have been retrofitted with lifts and other accessibility components since June 8, 1998 are also eligible for funding.

Eligible training costs are those required by the final accessibility rule as described in 49 CFR 37.209. These activities include training in proper

operation and maintenance of accessibility features and equipment, boarding assistance, securement of mobility aids, sensitive and appropriate interaction with passengers with disabilities, and handling and storage of mobility devices. The costs associated with developing training materials or providing training for local providers of over-the-road bus services for these purposes are eligible expenses.

FTA will not fund the incremental costs of acquiring used wheelchair accessible OTRBs, as it may be impossible to verify whether or not FTA funds were already used to make the vehicles accessible. Also, it would be difficult to place a value on the accessibility features based upon the depreciated value of the vehicle. FTA wishes to increase the number of wheelchair accessible over-the-road buses available to persons with disabilities throughout the country, and the purchase of used accessible vehicles, whether or not they were previously funded by FTA, does not further this objective.

FTA has sponsored the development of accessibility training materials for public transit operators. FTA-funded Project Action is a national technical assistance program to promote cooperation between the disability community and the transportation industry. Project Action provides training, resources and technical assistance to thousands of disability organizations, consumers with disabilities, and transportation operators. It maintains a resource center with the most up-to-date information on transportation accessibility. Project Action may be contacted at: Project Action, 700 Thirteenth Street NW., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20590, Phone: 1-800-659-6428, Internet address: <http://www.projectaction.org/>.

#### *G. Grant Criteria*

FTA will award grants based on:

1. The identified need for over-the-road bus accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas served by the applicant;
2. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates innovative strategies and financial commitment to providing access to over-the-road buses to persons with disabilities;
3. The extent to which the over-the-road bus operator acquires equipment required by DOT's over-the-road bus accessibility rule prior to the required timeframe in the rule;
4. The extent to which financing the costs of complying with DOT's rule presents a financial hardship for the applicant; and

5. The impact of accessibility requirements on the continuation of over-the-road bus service, with particular consideration of the impact of the requirements on service to rural areas and for low-income individuals. These are the statutory criteria upon which funding decisions will be made. In addition to these criteria, FTA may also consider other factors, such as the size of the applicant's fleet and the level of FTA funding that may already have been awarded to applicants in prior years.

#### H. Grant Requirements

Applicants selected for funding must include documentation necessary to meet the requirements of FTA's Nonurbanized Area Formula program (Section 5311 under Title 49, United States Code). Technical assistance regarding these requirements is available from each FTA regional office. The regional offices will contact those applicants selected for funding regarding procedures for making the required certifications and assurances to FTA before grants are made.

Those applicants selected for funding will be required to comply with all of the Federal requirements applicable to the OTRB Accessibility Program, provided in the comprehensive compilation below. Federal requirements apply to the incremental cost of adding wheelchair accessibility features to new vehicles or when retrofitting existing vehicles, not to the entire vehicle. All applicants are advised to read the entire list of requirements to be confident of their responsibilities and commitments for compliance.

The authority for these requirements are provided by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, Pub. L. 105-178, June 9, 1998, as amended by the TEA-21 Restoration Act 105-206, 112 Stat. 685, July 22, 1998, 49 U.S.C. chapter 53, Title 23, United States Code, DOT and FTA regulations at 49 CFR, and FTA Circulars.

#### 1. Buy America

In the OTRB Accessibility program, FTA's Buy America regulations, 49 CFR Part 661, apply to the incremental capital cost of making vehicles accessible. Those regulations do not apply to associated labor costs. The following discussion relates to the contract between the grantee and the prime contractor.

The "General Requirements" found at 49 CFR 661.5 apply to that portion of the accessibility system being funded. That section requires that all of the manufacturing processes for the product

take place in the United States and that all components of the product be made in the United States. A component is considered domestic if it is manufactured in the U.S.A., regardless of the origin of its subcomponents. The lift, the moveable seats, and the securement devices will all be considered components for purposes of this program; accordingly, as components, each must be manufactured in the United States. Should a recipient choose to request funding for only a specific component, such as the lift or the securement device, then the Buy America requirements would apply only to that item funded by FTA.

Three exceptions to the general requirements can be found at 49 CFR 661.7: first, a waiver may be requested when the application of the regulation is not in the public interest; second, a waiver may be requested if the materials and products being procured are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities and of a satisfactory quality; and third, a price differential waiver may be requested where the results of competitive procurement show that there is a 25 percent price difference between the domestic and foreign products. FTA approval of a waiver must be received by the recipient of FTA funds prior to the execution of contract.

It should also be noted that FTA has issued a general public interest waiver for all purchases under the Federal "small purchase" threshold, which is currently \$100,000. This waiver can be found in 49 CFR 661.7, Appendix A(e). In Section 3038(b) of TEA-21, Congress authorized FTA financing of the incremental capital costs of compliance with DOT's OTRB accessibility rule. Consistent with this provision, the small purchase waiver applies only to the incremental cost of the accessibility features FTA is funding. Where more than one bus is purchased, the grantee must consider the incremental cost increase for the entire procurement when determining if the small purchase waiver applies. For example, if \$30,000 is the incremental cost for the accessibility features eligible under this program per bus (regardless of the Federal share contribution), then a procurement of three buses with a total such cost of \$90,000, would qualify for the small purchase waiver. No special application to FTA would be required.

The grantee must obtain a certification from the bus manufacturer that all items included in the incremental cost for which the applicant

is applying for funds meet Buy America requirements.

The Buy America regulations can be found at <http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/legal/buyamer/>.

#### 2. Labor Protection

Before FTA may award a grant for capital assistance, 49 U.S.C. 5333(b) requires that fair and equitable arrangements must be made to protect the interests of transit employees affected by FTA assistance. Those arrangements must be certified by the Secretary of Labor as meeting the requirements of the statute. When a labor organization represents a group of affected employees in the service area of an FTA project, the employee protective arrangement is usually the product of negotiations or discussions with the union. The grant applicant can facilitate Department of Labor (DOL) certification by identifying in the application any previously certified protective arrangements that have been applied to similar projects undertaken by the grant applicant, if any. Receiving funds under the OTRB Accessibility program, however, will not require the grantee's employees to be represented by organized labor. Nothing in the labor protection provisions in 49 U.S.C. 5333(b) requires a motorcoach operator to become a union carrier or encourages union organizing in any manner. Upon receipt of a grant application requiring employee protective arrangements, FTA will transmit the application to DOL and request certification of the employee protective arrangements. In accordance with DOL guidelines, DOL notifies the relevant unions in the area of the project that a grant for assistance is pending and affords the grant applicant and union the opportunity to agree to an arrangement establishing the terms and conditions of the employee protections. If necessary, DOL furnishes technical and mediation assistance to the parties during their negotiations. The Secretary of Labor may determine the protections to be certified if the parties do not reach an agreement after good faith bargaining and mediation efforts have been exhausted. DOL will also set the protective conditions when affected employees in the service area are not represented by a union. When DOL determines that employee protective arrangements comply with labor protection requirements, DOL will provide a certification to FTA. The grant agreement between FTA and the grant applicant incorporates by reference the employee protective arrangements certified by DOL.

Applicants must identify any labor organizations that may represent their

employees and all labor organizations that represent the employees of any other transit providers in the service area of the project.

For each local of a nationally affiliated union, the applicant must provide the name of the national organization and the number or other designation of the local union. (For example, Amalgamated Transit Union local 1258) Since DOL makes its referral to the national union's headquarters, there is no need to provide a means of contacting the local organization.

However, for each independent labor organization (*i.e.*, a union that is not affiliated with a national or international organization) the local information will be necessary (name of organization, address, contact person, phone, fax numbers).

Where a labor organization represents transit employees in the service area of the project, DOL must refer the proposed protective arrangements to each union and to each recipient. For this reason, please provide DOL with a contact person, address, telephone number and fax number for your company, and associated union information.

DOL issued a **Federal Register** notice addressing the new TEA-21 programs, including the OTRB Accessibility Program, "Amendment to Section 5333(b) Guidelines to Carry Out New Programs Authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)"; Final Rule, dated July 28, 1999. FTA issued a "Dear Colleague" letter, dated December 5, 2000, addressing DOL processing of grant applications. Attached to the letter is an application checklist which provides information that DOL must have in order to review and certify FTA grant applications. This letter and attachment can be found at: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/office/public/c0019.html>. Questions concerning protective arrangements and related matters pertaining to transit employees should be addressed to the Division of Statutory Programs, Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Room N-5411, Washington, DC 20210; telephone (202) 693-0126, fax (202) 219-5338.

### 3. Planning

Applicants are encouraged to notify the appropriate state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) in areas likely to be served by equipment made accessible through funds made available in this program. Those organizations, in turn, should take appropriate steps to inform the public, and individuals

requiring fully accessible services in particular, of operators' intentions to expand the accessibility of their services. Incorporation of funded projects in the plans and transportation improvement programs of states and metropolitan areas by states and MPOs also is encouraged, but is not required.

### 4. Standard Assurances

The Applicant assures that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, FTA circulars, and other Federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA grant. The Applicant acknowledges that it is under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement issued for its project with FTA. The Applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies, and administrative practices might be modified from time to time and affect the implementation of the project. The Applicant agrees that the most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise.

*A. Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters for Primary Covered Transactions.* As required by U.S. DOT regulations on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) at 49 CFR 29.510:

(1) The Applicant (Primary Participant) certifies, to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not, within a three (3) year period preceding this certification, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction, violation of Federal or state antitrust statutes, or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in subparagraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this certification had one or more public transactions

(Federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) The Applicant also certifies that, if it later becomes aware of any information contradicting the statements of paragraph (1) above, it will promptly provide that information to FTA.

(3) If the Applicant (Primary Participant) is unable to certify to all statements in paragraphs (1) and (2) above, it shall indicate so in its signature page and provide a written explanation to FTA.

*B. Drug-Free Workplace Agreement.* As required by U.S. DOT regulations, "Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants)," 49 CFR part 29, subpart F, as modified by 41 U.S.C. 702, the Applicant agrees that it will provide a drug-free workplace by:

(1) Publishing a statement notifying its employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in its workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against its employees for violation of that prohibition;

(2) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform its employees about:

(a) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace,

(b) Its policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace,

(c) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs, and

(d) The penalties that may be imposed upon its employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;

(3) Making it a requirement that each of its employees be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (1) above;

(4) Notifying each of its employees in the statement required by paragraph (1) that, as a condition of employment financed with Federal assistance provided by the grant, the employee will be required to:

(a) Abide by the terms of the statement, and

(b) Notify the employer (Applicant) in writing of any conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) calendar days after that conviction;

(5) Notifying FTA in writing, within ten (10) calendar days after receiving notice required by paragraph (4)(b) above from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of that conviction. The Applicant, as employer of any convicted employee, must provide notice, including position title,

to every project officer or other designee on whose project activity the convicted employee was working. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;

(6) Taking one of the following actions within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice under paragraph (4)(b) of this agreement with respect to any employee who is so convicted:

(a) Taking appropriate personnel action against that employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, or

(b) Requiring that employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency; and

(7) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) of this agreement. The Applicant agrees to maintain a list identifying its headquarters location and each workplace it maintains in which project activities supported by FTA are conducted, and make that list readily accessible to FTA.

**C. Intergovernmental Review Assurance.** The Applicant assures that each application for Federal assistance submitted to FTA has been or will be submitted, as required by each state, for intergovernmental review to the appropriate state and local agencies. Specifically, the Applicant assures that it has fulfilled or will fulfill the obligations imposed on FTA by U.S. DOT regulations, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Transportation Programs and Activities," 49 CFR part 17.

**D. Nondiscrimination Assurance.** As required by 49 U.S.C. 5332 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age, and prohibits discrimination in employment or business opportunity), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, and U.S. DOT regulations, "Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act," 49 CFR part 21 at 21.7, the Applicant assures that it will comply with all requirements of 49 CFR part 21; FTA Circular 4702.1, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients", and other applicable directives, so that no person in the United States, on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex,

or age will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity (particularly in the level and quality of transportation services and transportation-related benefits) for which the Applicant receives Federal assistance awarded by the U.S. DOT or FTA as follows:

(1) The Applicant assures that each project will be conducted, property acquisitions will be undertaken, and project facilities will be operated in accordance with all applicable requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5332 and 49 CFR part 21, and understands that this assurance extends to its entire facility and to facilities operated in connection with the project.

(2) The Applicant assures that it will take appropriate action to ensure that any transferee receiving property financed with Federal assistance derived from FTA will comply with the applicable requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5332 and 49 CFR part 21.

(3) The Applicant assures that it will promptly take the necessary actions to effectuate this assurance, including notifying the public that complaints of discrimination in the provision of transportation-related services or benefits may be filed with U.S. DOT or FTA. Upon request by U.S. DOT or FTA, the Applicant assures that it will submit the required information pertaining to its compliance with these requirements.

As required by 49 U.S.C. 5332 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age, and prohibits discrimination in employment or business opportunity), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, and U.S. DOT regulations, "Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act," 49 CFR part 21 at 21.7, the Applicant assures that it will comply with all requirements of 49 CFR part 21; FTA Circular 4702.1, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients", and other applicable directives, so that no person in the United States, on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, or age will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity (particularly in the level and quality of transportation services and transportation-related benefits) for which the Applicant receives Federal assistance awarded by the U.S. DOT or FTA as follows:

(1) The Applicant assures that each project will be conducted, property acquisitions will be undertaken, and project facilities will be operated in accordance with all applicable requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5332 and 49 CFR part 21, and understands that this assurance extends to its entire facility and to facilities operated in connection with the project.

(2) The Applicant assures that it will take appropriate action to ensure that any transferee receiving property financed with Federal assistance derived from FTA will comply with the applicable requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5332 and 49 CFR part 21.

(3) The Applicant assures that it will promptly take the necessary actions to effectuate this assurance, including notifying the public that complaints of discrimination in the provision of transportation-related services or benefits may be filed with U.S. DOT or FTA. Upon request by U.S. DOT or FTA, the Applicant assures that it will submit the required information pertaining to its compliance with these requirements.

(4) The Applicant assures that it will make any changes in its 49 U.S.C. 5332 and Title VI implementing procedures as U.S. DOT or FTA may request.

(5) As required by 49 CFR 21.7(a)(2), the Applicant will include in each third party contract or subagreement provisions to invoke the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5332 and 49 CFR part 21, and include provisions to invoke those requirements in deeds and instruments recording the transfer of real property, structures, improvements.

**E. Assurance of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability.** As required by U.S. DOT regulations, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance," at 49 CFR part 27, implementing the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Applicant assures that, as a condition to the approval or extension of any Federal assistance awarded by FTA to construct any facility, obtain any rolling stock or other equipment, undertake studies, conduct research, or to participate in or obtain any benefit from any program administered by FTA, no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall be, solely by reason of that disability, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving or benefiting from Federal assistance administered by the FTA or any entity within U.S. DOT. The Applicant assures that project implementation and

operations so assisted will comply with all applicable requirements of U.S. DOT regulations implementing the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.* at 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38, and any applicable regulations and directives issued by other Federal departments or agencies.

5. Certifications Prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget (SF-424B and SF-424D) The Applicant certifies that it:

(a) Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial, and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in its application.

(b) Will give FTA, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the state, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.

(c) Will establish safeguard to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest or personal gain.

(d) Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable project time periods following receipt of FTA approval.

(e) Will comply with all statutes relating to nondiscrimination including, but not limited to:

(1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(2) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1681, 1683, and 1685 through 1687, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex;

(3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps;

(4) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6101 through 6107, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of age;

(5) The Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972, Pub. L. 92-255, March 21, 1972, and amendments thereto, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse;

(6) The Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention Act of 1970, Pub. L. 91-616, Dec. 31, 1970, and amendments thereto, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism;

(7) The Public Health Service Act of 1912, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 290dd-3 and 290ee-3, related to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records;

(8) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 3601 *et seq.*, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing;

(9) Any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statutes under which Federal assistance for the project may be provided including, but not limited to section 1101(b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, 23 U.S.C. 101 note, which provides for participation of disadvantaged business enterprises in FTA programs; and

(10) The requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) that may apply to the project.

(f) Will comply, or has complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, (Uniform Relocation Act) 42 U.S.C. 4601 *et seq.*, which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal and federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases. As required by U.S. DOT regulations, "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs," at 49 CFR 24.4, and sections 210 and 305 of the Uniform Relocation Act, 42 U.S.C. 4630 and 4655, the Applicant assures that it has the requisite authority under applicable state and local law and will comply or has complied with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act, 42 U.S.C. 4601 *et seq.*, and U.S. DOT regulations, "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs," 49 CFR part 24 including, but not limited to the following:

(1) The Applicant will adequately inform each affected person of the benefits, policies, and procedures provided for in 49 CFR part 24;

(2) The Applicant will provide fair and reasonable relocation payments and assistance required by 42 U.S.C. 4622, 4623, and 4624; 49 CFR part 24; and any applicable FTA procedures, to or for

families, individuals, partnerships, corporations or associations displaced as a result of any project financed with FTA assistance;

(3) The Applicant will provide relocation assistance programs offering the services described in 42 U.S.C. 4625 to such displaced families, individuals, partnerships, corporations, or associations in the manner provided in 49 CFR part 24 and FTA procedures;

(4) Within a reasonable time before displacement, the Applicant will make available comparable replacement dwellings to displaced families and individuals as required by 42 U.S.C. 4625(c)(3);

(5) The Applicant will carry out the relocation process in such a manner as to provide displaced persons with uniform and consistent services, and will make available replacement housing in the same range of choices with respect to such housing to all displaced persons regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin; and

(6) In acquiring real property, the Applicant will be guided to the greatest extent practicable under state law, by the real property acquisition policies of 42 U.S.C. 4651 and 4652;

(7) The Applicant will pay or reimburse property owners for necessary expenses as specified in 42 U.S.C. 4653 and 4654, with the understanding that FTA will participate in the Applicant's eligible costs of providing payments for those expenses as required by 42 U.S.C. 4631;

(8) The Applicant will execute such amendments to third party contracts and subagreements financed with FTA assistance and execute, furnish, and be bound by such additional documents as FTA may determine necessary to effectuate or implement the assurances provided herein; and

(9) The Applicant agrees to make these assurances part of or incorporate them by reference into any third party contract or subagreement, or any amendments thereto, relating to any project financed by FTA involving relocation or land acquisition and provide in any affected document that these relocation and land acquisition provisions shall supersede any conflicting provisions.

(g) To the extent applicable, will comply with provisions of the Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. 1501 through 1508, and 7324 through 7326, which limit the political activities of state and local agencies and their officers and employees whose principal employment activities are financed in whole or part with Federal funds including a Federal loan, grant, or cooperative agreement, but pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 142(g), does

not apply to a nonsupervisory employee of a transit system (or of any other agency or entity performing related functions) receiving FTA assistance to whom the Hatch Act does not otherwise apply.

(h) To the extent applicable, will comply with the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 276a through 276a(7), the Copeland Act, as amended, 18 U.S.C. 874 and 40 U.S.C. 276c, and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 327 through 333, regarding labor standards for federally-assisted subagreements.

(i) To the extent applicable, will comply with flood insurance purchase requirements of section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4012a(a), requiring recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.

(j) Will comply with environmental standards that may be prescribed to implement the following Federal laws and executive orders:

(1) Institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* and Executive Order No. 11514, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *note*;

(2) Notification of violating facilities pursuant to Executive Order No. 11738, 42 U.S.C. 7606 *note*;

(3) Protection of wetlands pursuant to Executive Order No. 11990, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *note*;

(4) Evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with Executive Order 11988, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *note*;

(5) Assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed pursuant to the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*

(6) Conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*;

(7) Protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 300h *et seq.*;

(8) Protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; and

(9) Environmental protections for Federal transit programs, including, but not limited to protections for a park,

recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance or any land from a historic site of national, state, or local significance used in a transit project as required by 49 U.S.C. 303.

(k) Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1271 *et seq.* relating to protecting components of the national wild and scenic rivers systems.

(l) Will assist FTA in assuring compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470f, Executive Order No. 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), 16 U.S.C. 470 *note*, and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 469a-1 *et seq.*

(m) Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, 42 U.S.C. 4801, which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.

(n) Will not dispose of, modify the use of, or change the terms of the real property title, or other interest in the site and facilities on which a construction project supported with FTA assistance takes place without permission and instructions from the awarding agency.

(o) Will record the Federal interest in the title of real property in accordance with FTA directives and will include a covenant in the title of real property acquired in whole or in part with Federal assistance funds to assure nondiscrimination during the useful life of the project.

(p) Will comply with FTA requirements concerning the drafting, review, and approval of construction plans and specifications of any construction project supported with FTA assistance. As required by U.S. DOT regulations, "Seismic Safety," 49 CFR 41.117(d), before accepting delivery of any building financed with FTA assistance, it will obtain a certificate of compliance with the seismic design and construction requirements of 49 CFR part 41.

(q) Will provide and maintain competent and adequate engineering supervision at the construction site of any project supported with FTA assistance to ensure that the complete work conforms with the approved plans and specifications and will furnish progress reports and such other information as may be required by FTA or the State.

(r) Will comply with the National Research Act, Pub. L. 93-348, July 12, 1974, as amended, regarding the

protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by Federal assistance and DOT regulation, "Protection of Human Subjects," 49 CFR part 11.

(s) Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 2131 *et seq.* pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by FTA assistance.

(t) Will have performed the financial and compliance audits required by the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, 31 U.S.C. 7501 *et seq.* and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations and Department of Transportation provisions of OMB A-133 Compliance Supplement, March 2000."

(u) Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing the project.

#### 6. Lobbying Certification for an Application Exceeding \$100,000

An Applicant that submits, or intends to submit this fiscal year, an application for Federal assistance exceeding \$100,000 must provide the following certification. Consequently, FTA may not provide Federal assistance for an application exceeding \$100,000 until the Applicant provides this certification by selecting category "II" on the Signature Page at the end of this document.

(a) As required by U.S. DOT regulations, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," at 49 CFR 20.110, the Applicant's authorized representative certifies to the best of his or her knowledge and belief that for each application for a Federal assistance exceeding \$100,000:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been or will be paid, by or on behalf of the Applicant, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress pertaining to the award of any Federal assistance, or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal assistance agreement; and

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member



of Congress in connection with any application to FTA for Federal assistance, the Applicant assures that it will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," including the information required by the form's instructions, which may be amended to omit such information as permitted by 31 U.S.C. 1352.

(b) The Applicant understands that this certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed and that submission of this certification is a prerequisite for providing Federal assistance for a transaction covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. The Applicant also understands that any person who fails to file a required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## II. Guidelines for Preparing Grant Application

FTA is conducting a national solicitation for applications under the OTRB Accessibility program. Grant awards will be made on a competitive basis. Applicants should submit 3 copies of their project proposal application, consistent with the application format provided at Appendix A, to the appropriate regional office. Project proposal applications must be received by FTA no later than February 2, 2004. The OTRB operators should submit the application to the office in the region in which its headquarters office is located (see Appendix B). The application should provide information on all items for which you are requesting funding in FY 2004. The application must include the following elements:

### 1. Applicant Information

This addresses basic identifying information, including:

- Company name and Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
- Contact information for notification of project selection: Contact name, address, fax and phone number.
- Description of services provided by company.
- For fixed-route carriers, whether you are a large (Class I, with gross annual operating revenues of \$5.3 million or more) or small (gross operating revenues of less than \$5.3 million annually) carrier.
- Existing fleet and employee information, including number of over-the-road buses used for intercity fixed-route service and other service and number of employees.

f. Estimate of the proportion of service, if any, that is intercity fixed-route.

g. Description of your technical, legal, and financial capacity to implement the proposed project.

### 2. Project Information

Every application must:

- Provide the Federal amount requested for each purpose for which funds are sought.
- How intercity fixed-route service meets the definition of intercity fixed-route service, including how service makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points.
- Document matching funds, including amount and source.
- Describe project, including components to be funded, *i.e.*, lifts, tie-downs, moveable seats, etc., and/or training.
- Provide project time-line, including significant milestones such as date or contract for purchase of vehicle(s), and actual or expected delivery date of vehicles.
- Address each of the five statutory evaluation criteria.
- Complete Standard Form 424, "Application For Federal Assistance".

### 3. Labor Information

- Identify any labor organizations that may represent your employees and all labor organizations that represent the employees of any transit providers in the service area of the project. For each local of a nationally affiliated union, the applicant must provide the name of the national organization and the number or other designation of the local union. (For example, Amalgamated Transit Union local 1258.) Since DOL makes its referral to the national union's headquarters, there is no need to provide a means of contacting the local organization.
- For each independent labor organization (*i.e.*, a union that is not affiliated with a national or international organization) the local information will be necessary (name of organization, address, contact person, phone, fax numbers).
- Where a labor organization represents transit employees in the service area of the project, DOL must refer the proposed protective arrangements to each union and to each recipient. For this reason, please provide DOL with a contact person, address, telephone number and fax number for your company and associated union information.

## III. Grant Application Review Process

Applications are to be submitted to the appropriate FTA Regional Office by

the close of business on February 2, 2004. FTA will screen all applications to determine whether all required eligibility elements, as described in Section 2 of the application, are present. An FTA evaluation team will evaluate each application according to the criteria described in this announcement.

### Notification

FTA expects to notify all applicants, both those selected for funding and those not selected, in summer 2004. Projects selected for funding will be published in a **Federal Register** notice.

Issued on: November 17, 2003.

**Jennifer L. Dorn,**  
Administrator.

## Appendix A—Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Program Project Proposal Application (Paper)

### 1. Applicant Information

- Company Name:
- DUNS Number:
- For Notification of Project Selection Contact:  
Name of Individual:  
Address:  
Telephone number:
- Describe Services Provided by Company, including Areas Served:
- Intercity Fixed-Route Carriers:  
\_\_\_\_ Large/Class I (gross annual operating revenues of \$5.3 Million or more)  
\_\_\_\_ Small (gross annual revenues of less than \$5.3 Million)
- Existing Fleet and Employee Information:  
# \_\_\_\_ Over-the-road Buses in fleet used for Intercity Fixed-route Service  
# \_\_\_\_ Over-the-road have lifts buses currently  
# \_\_\_\_ Over-the-road Buses in fleet used for Other Service, *e.g.*, Charter, Tour, & Commuter  
# \_\_\_\_ Over-the-road Buses currently have lifts  
# \_\_\_\_ Employees
- If you provide both intercity fixed-route service and another type of service, such as commuter, charter or tour service, please provide an estimate of the proportion of your service that is intercity.

\_\_\_\_ % of services is intercity fixed-route.

H. Describe your technical, legal, and financial capacity to implement the proposed project.

### 2. Project Information

A. Federal Amount Requested (Up to 90% Federal Share):

Intercity Fixed Route Service:

\$ \_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_ New Over-the-road Buses  
\$ \_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_ Retrofits  
\$ \_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_ Employees—Training

If funds are being requested for intercity fixed-route services, please describe how the service meets the definition of intercity fixed-route service, including how the service makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points.



*Other Service (Commuter, Charter, or Tour)*

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_\_ New Over-the-road Buses  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_\_ Retrofits  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for # \_\_\_\_\_ Employees—Training

*B. Document Matching Funds, including Amount and Source:**C. Describe Project, including Components to be funded, i.e., Lifts, Tie-downs, Moveable Seats, etc. and/or Training:**D. Provide Project Time Line, including Significant Milestones such as Date of Contract for Purchase of Vehicle(s), and actual or expected delivery date of vehicles:**E. Project Evaluation Criteria—Projects will be evaluated according to the following criteria:*

The identified need for over-the-road bus accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas served by the applicant. (20 points)

The extent to which the applicant demonstrated innovative strategies and financial commitment to providing access to over-the-road buses to persons with disabilities. (20 points)

The extent to which the over-the-road bus operator acquired equipment required by DOT's over-the-road bus accessibility rule prior to the required time-frame in the rule. (20 points)

The extent to which financing the costs of complying with DOT's rule presents a financial hardship for the applicant. (20 points)

The impact of accessibility requirements on the continuation of over-the-road bus service with particular consideration of the impact of the requirements on service to rural areas and for low-income individuals. (20 points)

**Appendix B—FTA Regional Offices**

Region I—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine

Richard H. Doyle, FTA Regional Administrator, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, Kendall Square, 55 Broadway, Suite 920, Cambridge, MA 02142-1093, (617) 494-2055

Region II—New York, New Jersey, Virgin Islands

Letitia Thompson, FTA Regional Administrator, One Bowling Green, Room 429, New York, NY 10004-1415, (212) 668-2170

Region III—Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Washington, DC

Herman Shipman, Acting FTA Regional Administrator, 1760 Market Street, Suite 500, Philadelphia, PA 19103-4124, (215) 656-7100

Region IV—Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Puerto Rico

Jerry Franklin, FTA Regional Administrator, 61 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 17T50, Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 562-3500

Region V—Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan

Joel Ettinger, FTA Regional Administrator, 200 West Adams Street, 24th Floor, Suite

320, Chicago, IL 60606-5232, (312) 353-2789

Region VI—Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma

Robert Patrick, FTA Regional Administrator, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36, Ft. Worth, TX 76102, (817) 978-0550

Region VII—Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri

Mokhtee Ahmad, Regional Administrator, 901 Locust Street, Suite 404, Kansas City, MO 64106, (816) 329-3920

Region VIII—Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Utah

Lee Waddleton, FTA Regional Administrator, Columbine Place 216 16th Street, Suite 650, Denver, CO 80202-5120, (303) 844-3242

Region IX—California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam

Leslie Rogers, FTA Regional Administrator, 201 Mission Street, Suite 2210, San Francisco, CA 94105-1831, (415) 744-3133

Region X—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska

Richard Krochalis, FTA Regional Administrator, Jackson Federal Building, 915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142, Seattle, WA 98174-1002, (206) 220-7954

[FR Doc. 03-29238 Filed 11-21-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

**[Docket No. NHTSA 2002-15644 Notice 2]**

**Freightliner LLC; Grant of Application for Decision for Determination of Inconsequential Non-Compliance**

This notice grants the application by Freightliner LLC (Freightliner) on behalf of Thomas Built Buses, Inc. (Thomas) of High Point, North Carolina, to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 for a noncompliance with 49 CFR 571.205, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 205, "Glazing Materials." Freightliner has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR Part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports." Pursuant to 49 CFR Part 556, "Exemption for Inconsequential Defect or Noncompliance," Freightliner has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301, "Motor Vehicle Safety." The basis of the grant is that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

Notice of receipt of the application was published August 19, 2003, (68 FR 49841) affording an opportunity for

comment. The comment closing date was September 18, 2003. No comments were received.

From September 22, 2002 to February 24, 2003, Freightliner manufactured 700 Thomas Built Conventional, MPV-EF and HDX buses with driver side windows that do not meet the labeling requirements of paragraph S6 of FMVSS No. 205. The driver side windows were not marked with the "DOT" symbol, manufacturer's number and the AS 2 code mark.

FMVSS No. 205, paragraph S6, "Certification and marking," requires that each piece of glazing material shall be marked in accordance with Section 6 of the American National Standard "Safety Code for Safety Glazing Materials for Glazing Materials for Glazing in Motor Vehicles Operating on Land Highways" Z-26.1-1977, January 26, 1977, as supplemented by Z26.1a, July 3, 1980 (ANS Z26). This specifies all safety glazing materials for use in accordance with this code shall be legibly and permanently marked in letters and numerals at least 0.070 inch (1.78 mm) in height, with the words "American National Standard" or the characters "AS" and, in addition, with a model number that will identify the type of construction of the glazing material. The glazing materials shall also be marked with the manufacturer's distinctive designation or trademark. In addition, FMVSS No. 205, paragraph S6.2 requires that each piece of glazing material be marked with the symbol "DOT." Freightliner stated that the noncompliance consists of the driver side windows not being marked with the "DOT" symbol, manufacturer's number and the AS 2 code mark.

According to Freightliner, the manufacturer of the window, Double Eagle Window MFG, LLC, notified Freightliner on April 15, 2003 of the labeling noncompliance. Freightliner submitted a compliance test report indicating that the tempered glass parts in question were in full compliance with 49 CFR 571.205 except for labeling.

NHTSA has reviewed Freightliner's application and, for the reasons discussed in this paragraph, concludes that the noncompliance of the Freightliner driver side windows is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety. Freightliner has provided documentation indicating that the driver side windows do comply with all other safety performance requirements of the standard except labeling requirements. Consequently, the noncompliance would not affect the purposes of FMVSS No. 205, which include reducing injuries from impacts to glazing surfaces, ensuring driver