

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-99-6039]

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is September 7, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 am to 5 pm].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-5306).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

J.K. Motors of Kingsville, Maryland ("J.K.") (Registered Importer 90-006) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which J.K. believes are substantially similar are 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars that were manufactured for importation into, and sale in, the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared non-U.S. certified 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars to their U.S.-certified counterparts, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

J.K. submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that non-U.S. certified 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars, as originally manufactured, conform to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as their U.S. certified counterparts, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that non-U.S. certified 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars are identical to their U.S. certified counterparts with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence* * * *, 103 *Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 105 *Hydraulic Brake Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 109 *New Pneumatic Tires*, 113 *Hood Latch Systems*, 116 *Brake Fluid*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact*, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 212 *Windshield*

Retention, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

Additionally, the petitioner states that non-U.S. certified 1994-1999 Mercedes-Benz C Class passenger cars comply with the Bumper Standard found in 49 CFR Part 581.

Petitioner also contends that the vehicles are capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 101 *Controls and Displays*: (a) substitution of a lens marked "Brake" for a lens with a noncomplying symbol on the brake failure indicator lamp; (b) replacement of the speedometer with one calibrated in miles per hour.

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: (a) installation of U.S.-model headlamps and front sidemarker lamps; (b) installation of U.S.-model taillamp assemblies which incorporate rear sidemarker lights; (c) installation of a U.S.-model high mounted stop lamp on vehicles that are not already so equipped.

Standard No. 110 *Tire Selection and Rims*: installation of a tire information placard.

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirror*: replacement of the passenger side rearview mirror with a U.S.-model component.

Standard No. 114 *Theft Protection*: installation of a warning buzzer and a warning buzzer microswitch in the steering lock assembly.

Standard No. 118 *Power Window Systems*: installation of a relay in the power window system so that the window transport is inoperative when the ignition is switched off.

Standard No. 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*: (a) installation of a safety belt warning buzzer, wired to the driver's seat belt latch; (b) replacement of the driver's and passenger's side air bags, control units, sensors, seat belts and knee bolsters with U.S.-model components on vehicles that are not already so equipped. The petitioner states that the vehicles are equipped at the front and rear outboard seating positions with combination lap and shoulder belts that are self tensioning and capable of being released by means of a single red push-button, and with a lap belt in the rear center designated seating position.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: installation of U.S.-model doorbars in vehicles that are not already so equipped.

The petitioner also states that a vehicle identification plate must be

affixed to the vehicle near the left windshield post and a reference and certification label must be affixed in the area of the left front door post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR Part 565.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 am to 5 pm]. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30141 (a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: August 2, 1999.

Marilynne Jacobs,

Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.
[FR Doc. 99-20180 Filed 8-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program; Request for Proposals

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division (E/PY), of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program (CBYX). For applicants' information, on October 1, 1999, the Bureau will become part of the U.S. Department of State. The integration will not affect the content of this announcement or nature of the program described. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501c may submit proposals to facilitate academic exchanges between American and German high school students and young professionals.

Program Information

Overview

The CBYX program supports the exchange of American and German young people in order to sustain and strengthen German-American friendship

based on common values of democracy and to convey lasting personal and institutional relationships to the successor generation. The primary objective of the program is to encourage American and German youth to learn about each other's society and culture through educational exchange. Additional goals for this competition include a renewed effort to promote the participants' roles as young ambassadors and the impact they can have on US-German relations, and to enhance Congressional involvement in the program and strengthen the linkages between US Representatives and their Bundestag counterparts. The program provides a full scholarship for an academic year experience of living and studying in the host country. CBYX is administered by the U.S. Information Agency and the German Bundestag Administrative Office, PB4. Known in Germany as the Parlamentarisches Patenschafts-Programm (PPP), the CBYX program was inaugurated in 1983 through a bilateral agreement between the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Each government provides funding to exchange organizations through assistance awards for the costs of participant recruitment and selection, international airfare, orientation and debriefing, and hosting support for the respective exchange participants. The U.S.-German agreement calls for an open grants competition every four years, and PB4 is holding a simultaneous open competition to select the German counterpart organizations that will manage the program in Germany. High school organizations that are successful in this competition will be awarded start-up grants in FY2000 to administer the recruitment and selection of participants for academic year 2001-02. Organizations for each component will be eligible for renewal grants in FY2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The actual number of participants exchanged each year is dependent on the amount of funding made available by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Though Congress has not yet determined the budget level for FY2000, the competition for program year 2001-02 will be based on approximately 400 American and approximately 400 German participants. Throughout the four-year grant cycle, representatives of both governments will hold annual discussions to determine the final participant numbers for each academic year. Participants are chosen according to procedures and criteria established by each government. In the U.S. the CBYX program has four components.

1. High School Component

This component provides 300 scholarships for a one-year educational and cultural homestay experience to American high school students ages 15-18. (A reciprocal exchange of approximately 300 American and 300 German high school students will take place annually.) In lieu of the traditional nationwide high-school participant competition, organizations are invited to bid on conducting merit-based competitions in one or more of five designated regions of the United States, as follows:

Northeast: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Delaware, Maryland.

Southeast: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico.

Central States: Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska.

Southwest: Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Southern California * (* the northern border of this region includes the counties of Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, and Inyo).

Pacific/Northwest: Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Northern California * (* the southern border of this region includes the counties of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Merced, Madera, and Mono).

Organizations may bid on more than one region, indicating the most preferred area(s) in priority order. A maximum of five organizations will be selected to conduct all aspects of the competition in one of each of the five regions for 60 American participants. Organizations that are awarded a grant will conduct advertising, recruitment, processing of applications, screening, selection, pre-departure orientations and debriefings, and management of all administrative and logistical matters including domestic and international travel.

In the host country, American and German partner organizations will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientation for the respective exchange students, placement of the students in host families and schools (nationwide), arrange program enrichment activities, conduct the recruitment, screening, selection and orientation of host families, provide program monitoring,