

from the inherent risks associated with transporting hazardous materials.

The HMPE team found that DOT's hazardous materials programs work reasonably well but could be improved. The hazardous materials programs lack Departmentwide strategic planning and direction necessary to ensure effective deployment of resources, and there are insufficient reliable data upon which to make informed program decisions. The program evaluation's major findings were:

- The Secretarial delegations do not provide for Departmentwide coordination or oversight of the five Operating Administrations responsible for ensuring hazardous materials safety. To address this, DOT needs to establish a focal point to administer and deliver a Departmentwide hazardous materials program, aimed at intermodal and cross-modal issues, to provide for more effective deployment of resources. DOT should also place more emphasis on hazardous materials safety in its Strategic and Performance Plan(s) to better guide program delivery and measure results.

- Shippers of hazardous materials generally receive less attention Departmentwide than carriers, yet they offer the greatest opportunity to improve safety. Shippers are a common element across the Operating Administrations, perform critical functions early in the transportation stream, and can impact safety system-wide. As a result, the Department needs to develop Departmentwide strategies and actions to focus more on high-risk or problem shippers through targeted outreach and inspection activities.

- Human error continues to be the single greatest contributing factor in hazardous materials incidents and DOT has not been effective in changing this trend. To address this, in part, DOT should strengthen its training standards to improve industry safety practices and compliance with the HMR to reduce incidents. Also, the traveling public is largely unaware of the dangers of the hazardous materials they bring into the transportation system and the dangerous consequences of unsafe driver actions around vehicles, especially those transporting hazardous materials. Accordingly, DOT needs to develop a coordinated, national campaign to increase the traveling public's awareness of the dangers of hazardous materials and reduce the risk of hazardous materials incidents.

- DOT lacks reliable, accurate, and timely data to measure program effectiveness and make informed program delivery and resource decisions. DOT needs to improve

hazardous materials census, incident, compliance, and budget data Departmentwide and develop ways to increase data availability and usefulness. DOT should also improve its analysis of incident data to better understand the root causes of hazardous materials incidents and address these through Departmentwide hazardous materials actions and broader safety program initiatives.

- In addition, a number of areas were identified requiring further analysis or other actions related to: better understanding undeclared shipments; the complexity and adequacy of the current regulations; safety gaps related to hazardous materials shipments in the US mail; enhanced inspection authority; and ways to improve DOT's current performance measure.

III. Recommendations

The HMPE team recommends the hazardous materials program be improved by:

- Strengthening strategic planning and coordination by establishing an institutional capacity in the Department to administer and deliver a coordinated hazardous materials program with the authority to establish Departmentwide policy, program objectives, and priorities and focus budget and resource strategies. For example, if analysis of inspection and incident data revealed that improper preparation of closure devices on plastic drums was becoming a problem, the recommended institutional capacity would be able to develop Departmentwide objectives and strategies to address the issue.

- Enhancing program delivery by identifying and focusing more on high-risk or problem shippers, more effectively using all available tools at DOT's disposal, and identifying other critical points in the transportation stream for program focus. For example, problem shippers, such as those with many hazardous materials incidents, may be targeted for inspections, while infrequent hazardous materials shippers may benefit more from outreach.

- Improving outreach aimed at the traveling public by better educating passengers on what materials are hazardous and should not be carried aboard, or placed in stowed luggage on, planes, trains, and buses. DOT should also take steps to increase public awareness about the dangerous consequences of unsafe driver actions around vehicles transporting hazardous materials.

- Strengthening the training regulations and tasking the institutional capacity to work with RSPA, the other Operating Administrations, and

industry to identify ways to ensure hazardous materials employees are adequately trained to carry out their jobs in a safe manner.

- Using strike force inspections to cross-train inspectors as well as enforce regulations. Strike force operations concentrate inspectors from the Operating Administrations and other Federal, state, and local agencies at intermodal locations for a specific time period to conduct hazardous materials inspections of more than one mode of transportation using that targeted location. In addition to enforcing compliance, strike force operations can be used to train inspectors from one Operating Administration on the issues, problems, and regulatory requirements of other Operating Administrations.

- Enriching the quality of hazardous materials data by tasking the Bureau of Transportation Statistics to work with the Operating Administrations to determine data needs, collection strategies, and analytical techniques.

- Having the new institutional capacity address several regulatory and programmatic issues identified by the team during the program evaluation, but which were too complex or time consuming for this program evaluation.

Summary findings of the HMPE were published in the combined DOT Performance Plan (FY 2001) and Report (FY 1999) dated March 31, 2000, in support of the Government Performance and Results Act. An electronic copy of the HMPE Executive Summary and the full HMPE report is available on the internet at: <http://hazmat.dot.gov/hmpe.htm>.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 5, 2000.

Jackie A. Goff,

Co-Chair, Hazardous Materials Program Evaluation Team.

George A. Whitney,

Co-Chair, Hazardous Materials Program Evaluation Team.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Advisory Board; Notice of Change of Meeting Location

The location of the meeting of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, to be held at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 2000, notice of which was published in the **Federal Register** on March 30 (65 FR 17000), has been changed. The new location is the Sheraton West Palm

Beach Hotel, 630 Clearwater Park Road, West Palm Beach, Florida.

Issued at Washington, D.C. on April 7, 2000.

Marc C. Owen,

Advisory Board Liaison.

[FR Doc. 00-9073 Filed 4-10-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-61-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Fiscal Service

Financial Management Service; Proposed Collection of Information: Final Rule—Administrative Offset, Collection of Past-Due Child Support

AGENCY: Financial Management Service, Fiscal Service, Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Financial Management Service, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on a continuing information collection. By this notice, the Financial Management Service solicits comments concerning the "Final Rule—Administrative Offset, Collection of Past-Due Child Support".

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before June 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Financial Management Service, 3700 East West Highway, Programs Branch, Room 144, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Mary MacLeod, Manager, Customer Liaison Branch, Room 439F, 401-14th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20227, (202) 874-7451.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)), the Financial Management Service solicits comments on the collection of information described below.

Title: Final Rule—Administrative Offset, Collection of Past-Due Child Support.

OMB Number: 1510-0069.

Form Number: N/A.

Abstract: The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 authorizes the collection of past-due child support by offset of nontax Federal payments. Executive Order 13019 of September 28, 1996, requires Treasury to promptly develop and implement procedures necessary to implement this authority.

Current Actions: Extension of currently approved collection.

Type of Review: Regular.

Affected Public: State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 54.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 103 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 5,562.

Comments: Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: April 4, 2000.

Nancy C. Fleetwood,

Assistant Commissioner, Debt Management Services.

[FR Doc. 00-8860 Filed 4-10-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-35-M

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0073]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public

comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed to determine the amount of educational benefits payable to veterans or eligible persons.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before June 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0073" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Enrollment Certification, VA Form 22-1999. (NOTE: A reference to VA Form 22-1999 also includes VA Forms 22-1999-1, 22-1999-2, and 22-1999-3 unless otherwise specified. VA Forms 22-1999-1, 22-1999-2, and 22-1999-3 contain the same information as VA Form 22-1999.)

OMB Control Number: 2900-0073.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Educational institutions and job establishments use VA Form 22-1999 to report information concerning the enrollment or reenrollment into training of veterans, service persons, reservists, and other eligible persons. The information collected on VA Form 22-1999 is used by VA to determine the amount of educational benefits payable to the trainee during the period of