

entries in the Commission's databases. To address this problem, the Petition suggested that the Commission's systems identify transactions that appear to be duplicates and that the Reports Analysis Division send out request for additional information notices to clarify the duplication. As stated above, the Commission's internal procedures, including RFAI notices, are not an appropriate subject for rulemaking. However, the Commission notes that the upcoming expansion of its electronic filing program may eliminate many duplicate entries.

C. Additional Issues Not Included in the Petition

Two commenters included three additional suggestions in their comments on the Petition. They are: (1) Implement better enforcement tools such as random audits, the publication of a list of committees who file incomplete reports, and a schedule of fees for non-compliance; (2) require electronic filing for all committees; and (3) require Senate candidates to file reports directly with the FEC. One of these commenters also added another recommendation requiring multi-candidate entities to issue separate checks to each separate recipient. Because these suggestions are beyond the scope of the Petition for Rulemaking, the Commission will not initiate a new rulemaking project in response to these additional recommendations. In addition, some of the suggestions, such as random audits, are beyond the Commission's statutory authority.

However, the Commission has implemented or is about to implement new programs and procedures since the publication of the NOA that address several of these issues. The new Administrative Fines program, 65 FR 31787 (May 19, 2000) (to be codified at 11 CFR part 111, subpart B), that went into effect in July, 2000, will assess civil money penalties in accordance with the schedules of penalties on political committees who fail to file their reports in a timely manner. The Commission will also require political committees whose annual contributions or expenditures exceed or are expected to exceed \$50,000 to file their reports electronically beginning in January, 2001. 65 FR 38415 (June 21, 2000) (to be codified at 11 CFR 104.18). However, electronic filing cannot be extended to all political committees absent further amendments to the FECA. A legislative change would also be needed for senatorial candidates to file directly with the FEC. However, the Secretary of the Senate has automated the transfer of

information from the Senate Public Records' Office to the FEC and the information can be viewed in electronic form on the Commission's website at www.FEC.gov.

While the Commission has decided not to initiate a new rulemaking in response to this petition, changes the Commission is making to its operations, computer systems, forms, and regulations, as described above, will further POGO's goal of enhancing timely and accurate dissemination of campaign finance information to the public. Accordingly, no further action on the Petition for Rulemaking will be taken at this time. See 11 CFR 200.4.

Dated: November 2, 2000.

Darryl R. Wold,

Chairman, Federal Election Commission.

[FR Doc. 00-28601 Filed 11-7-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6715-01-P

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

13 CFR Part 124

8(a) Business Development/Small Disadvantaged Business Status Determinations

AGENCY: Small Business Administration.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: In order to make the award of contracts under the 8(a) Business Development program a more attractive procurement alternative in today's streamlined Federal Government procurement environment, the Small Business Administration (SBA) proposes to amend its current 8(a) regulations to permit SBA to delegate to procuring agencies its authority to accept requirements for the 8(a) program.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before January 8, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Linda Williams, Associate Administrator for Policy, Planning, and Liaison, 409 Third Street, SW., Washington, DC 20416.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Delorice Ford, Associate Administrator for 8(a) Business Development, at (202) 205-6416.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Streamlining Act of 1994 dramatically changed the way the Federal Government buys its goods and services. In today's changing procurement environment, there are increasingly larger contract opportunities that often are not suitable for small businesses to perform as prime contractors. Agencies are also using

streamlined procurement practices such as multiple award contracts, Government-Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), Federal supply schedules, and credit card purchases. At the same time, the 8(a) Business Development (BD) program contract mechanisms have not been modernized to successfully link-up with the acquisition vehicles authorized by procurement reform. The impact is fewer contract opportunities for 8(a) Program Participants.

In order to make the award of contracts under the 8(a) BD program a more attractive procurement alternative and to strengthen the effectiveness of the 8(a) BD program, SBA proposes to make the offer and acceptance of requirements for award through the 8(a) BD program simpler and faster. Specifically, SBA proposes to amend its current 8(a) regulations to permit SBA to delegate to procuring agencies its authority to accept requirements for the 8(a) program. This change would reduce the administrative burden on procuring agencies and allow SBA to refocus its efforts on providing business development, including contract assistance, to Program Participants. SBA believes that this change would make the 8(a) program more attractive by reducing the 8(a) procurement leadtime by up to twelve days.

SBA would continue to determine eligibility for the award of 8(a) contracts, but would do so on an annual rather than on a contract-by-contract basis. SBA would maintain the listing of firms that are eligible for the award of 8(a) contracts in PRO-Net. In addition, SBA would require Program Participants to notify SBA of any changes in ownership, control, social disadvantage or economic disadvantage in order to ensure that PRO-Net is kept current regarding any firm's continued eligibility for 8(a) awards. A procuring agency could accept SBA's PRO-Net designation and accept a specific 8(a) requirement on behalf of a Program Participant so determined to be eligible.

By delegating its authority to accept requirements for award through the 8(a) program to procuring activities, SBA could better meet the business development aspects of the 8(a) BD program and would be in a better position to comply with a recent recommendation in the July 2000 General Accounting Office (GAO) report titled, *SBA Could Better Focus its 8(a) Program to Help Firms Obtain Contracts* (GAO/RCED-00-196). GAO recommended that SBA work with its district offices to place priority on helping inform Program Participants about contracting opportunities,

assisting Participants with contracts at Federal agencies, and becoming more involved with Participants as they seek and negotiate contracts. The proposed change would allow SBA to use the resources currently expended on accepting requirements and determining eligibility on a contract-by-contract basis to provide much needed business development assistance to Participants, including training on the Federal contracting process, to enhance their competitive viability.

Compliance With Executive Orders 13132, 12988 and 12866, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), and the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 3501 et seq.)

SBA certifies that this rule is not a "significant" regulatory action under Executive Order 12866.

SBA has determined that this rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. SS 601–612. The rule would not impose any requirements and would not otherwise affect the kinds of procurement requirements that can be available for award through the 8(a) BD program. It would merely make a procedural change to SBA's current regulations that would authorize SBA to delegate its authority to procuring agencies where appropriate.

For the purpose of the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35, SBA certifies that this rule would not impose new reporting or record keeping requirements.

For purposes of Executive Order 13132, SBA certifies that this rule does not have any federalism implications warranting the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For purposes of Executive Order 12978, SBA certifies that this rule is drafted, to the extent practicable, in accordance with the standards set forth in section 2 of this order.

List of Subjects in 13 CFR Part 124

Government procurement; Hawaiian natives; Minority businesses; Reporting and recordkeeping requirements; Technical assistance.

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, SBA proposes to amend Title 13, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), as follows:

PART 124—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 13 CFR part 124 would continue to read as follows:

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 634(b)(6), 636(j), 637(a), 637(d) and Pub. L. 99–661, Pub. L. 100–656, sec. 1207, Pub. L. 101–37, Pub. L. 101–574, and 42 U.S.C. 9815.

2. Section 124.502 would be amended by adding new paragraph (d) to read as follows:

§ 124.502 How does an agency offer a procurement to SBA for award through the 8(a) BD program?

* * * * *

(d) Where SBA has delegated its authority to accept requirements for award through the 8(a) BD program to a procuring activity, the procuring activity need not send an offering letter to SBA. In such a case, the procuring activity must ensure that the information set forth in paragraph (c) of this section is contained in its contracting file.

3. Section 124.503(i) would be revised to read as follows:

§ 124.503 How does SBA accept a procurement for award through the 8(a) BD program?

* * * * *

(i) *Delegation of acceptance authority to procuring activities.* (1) SBA may delegate its authority to accept requirements for award through the 8(a) BD program to procuring activities where appropriate.

(2) Where SBA delegates its authority to accept requirements for award through the 8(a) BD program to a procuring activity, the procuring activity may rely on SBA's determination that a particular Program Participant is eligible for award as set forth in Pro-Net.

(3) Where SBA has delegated its 8(a) contract execution authority to a procuring activity but has not delegated its authority to accept requirements for award through the 8(a) BD program to such activity, the procuring activity must still offer and SBA must still accept all requirements intended to be awarded as 8(a) contracts, except as provided in paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section.

Dated: November 2, 2000.

Aida Alvarez,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00–28584 Filed 11–7–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[CGD01–00–234]

RIN 2115–AE47

Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Fort Point Channel, MA

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard proposes to change the drawbridge operating regulations for the Northern Avenue Bridge, mile 0.1, across the Fort Point Channel at Boston, Massachusetts. This proposed rule would revise the drawbridge operating regulations to provide bridge openings during times the bridge previously did not open and also place the bridge on an advance notice basis during times when there have been few requests to open the bridge. This action is expected to better meet the present needs of navigation.

DATES: Comments must reach the Coast Guard on or before January 8, 2001.

ADDRESSES: You may mail comments to Commander (obr), First Coast Guard District, Bridge Branch, at 408 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA. 02110–3350, or deliver them to the same address between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is (617) 223–8364. The First Coast Guard District, Bridge Branch, maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents indicated in this preamble as being available in the docket, will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at the First Coast Guard District, Bridge Branch, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except, Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John McDonald, Project Officer, First Coast Guard District, (617) 223–8364.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Request for comments

We encourage you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments or related material. If you do so, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this rulemaking (CGD01–00–234), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and related material in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches,