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TITLE 15--COMMERCE AND FOREIGN TRADE

CHAPTER XI--TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PART 1170--METRIC CONVERSION POLICY FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES

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Sec. 1170.1 Purpose.

To provide policy direction for Federal agencies in their transition to use of the metric system of measurement.

Sec. 1170.2 Definition.

Metric system means the International System of Units (SI) established by the General Conference of Weights and Measures in 1960, as interpreted or modified from time to time for the United States by the Secretary of Commerce under the authority of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 and the Metric Education Act of 1978.

Other business-related activities means measurement sensitive commerical or business directed transactions or programs, i.e., standard

or specification development, publications, or agency statements of general applicability and future effect designed to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or policy or describing the procedure or practice requirements of an agency. ``Measurement sensitive'' means the choice of measurement unit is a critical component of the activity, i.e., an agency rule/regulation to collect samples or measure something at specific distances or to specific depths, specifications requiring intake or discharge of a product to certain volumes or flow rates, guidelines for clearances between objects for safety, security or environmental purposes, etc.

Sec. 1170.3 General policy.

The Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100-418, section 5164) amended the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 to, among other things, require that each Federal agency, by a date certain and to the extent economically feasible by the end of the fiscal year 1992, use the metric system of measurement in its procurements, grants, and other business-related activities, except to the extent that such

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use is impractical or is likely to cause significant inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms, such as when foreign competitors are producting competing products in non-metric units.

(a) The Secretary of Commerce will appoint a Commerce Department Under Secretary to assist in coordinating the efforts of Federal agencies in meeting their obligations under the Metric Conversion Act, as amended.

(b) Federal agencies shall coordinate and plan for the use of the metric system in their procurements, grants and other business-related activities consistent with the requirements of the Metric Conversion Act, as amended. Federal agencies shall encourage and support an environment which will facilitate the transition process. When taking initiatives, they shall give due consideration to known effects of their actions on State and local governments and the private sector, paying particular attention to effects on small business.

(c) Each Federal agency shall be responsible for developing plans, establishing necessary organizational structure, and allocating appropriate resources to carry out this policy.

Sec. 1170.4 Guidelines.

Each agency shall:

(a) Establish plans and dates for use of the metric system in

procurements, grants and other business-related activities;

(b) Coordinate metric transition plans with other Federal agencies, State and local governments and the private sector;

(c) Require maximum practical use of metric in areas where Federal procurement and activity represents a predominant influence on industry standards (e.g.: weapon systems or space exploration). Strongly encourage metrication in industry standards where Federal procurement and activity is not the predominant influence, consistent with the legal status of the metric system as the preferred system of weights and measures for United States trade and commerce;

(d) Assist in resolving metric-related problems brought to the attention of the agency that are associated with agency actions, activities or programs undertaken in compliance with these guidelines or other laws or regulations;

(e) Identify measurement-sensitive agency policies and procedures and ensure that regulations, standards, specifications, procurement policies and appropriate legislative proposals are updated to remove barriers to transition to the metric system;

(f) Consider cost effects of metric use in setting agency policies, programs and actions and determine criteria for the assessment of their economic feasibility. Such criteria should appropriately weigh both agency costs and national economic benefits related to changing to the use of metric;

(g) Provide for full public involvement and timely information about significant metrication policies, programs and actions;

(h) Seek out ways to increase understanding of the metric system of measurement through educational information and guidance and in agency publications;

(i) Consider, particularly, the effects of agency metric policies and practices on small business; and

(j) Consistent with the Federal Acquisition Regulation System (48 CFR), accept, without prejudice, products and services dimensioned in metric when they are offered at competitive prices and meet the needs of the Government, and ensure that acquisition planning considers metric requirements.

Sec. 1170.5 Recommendations for agency organization.

Each agency shall:

(a) Participate, as appropriate, in the Interagency Council on Metric Policy (ICMP), and/or its working committee, the Metrication Operating Committee (MOC), in coordinating and providing policy guidance for the U.S. Government's transtion to use of the metric system.

(b) Designate a senior policy official to be responsible for agency metric policy and to represent the agency on the ICMP.

(c) Designate an appropriate official to represent the agency on the Metrication Operating Committee (MOC), an interagency committee reporting to the ICMP.

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(d) Maintain liaison with private sector groups (such as the American National Metric Council and the U.S Metric Association) that are involved in planning for or coordinating National transition to the metric system.

(e) Provide for internal guidelines, training and documentation to assure employee awareness and understanding of agency metric policies and programs.

Sec. 1170.6 Reporting requirement.

Each Federal agency shall, as part of its annual budget submission each fiscal year, report to the Congress on the metric implementation actions it has taken during the previous fiscal year. The report will include the agency's implementation plans, with a current timetable for the agency's transition to the metric system, as well as actions planned for the budget year involved to implement fully the metric system, in accordance with this policy. Reporting shall cease for an agency in the fiscal year after it has fully implemented metric usage, as prescribed by the Metric Conversion Act (15 U.S.C. 205b(2).)

Secs. 1170.7-1170.199 [Reserved]