

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

14 CFR Part 255 and Part 399

[Dockets Nos. OST-97-2881, OST-97-3014, OST-98-4775, and OST-99-5888]

RIN 2105-AC65

Computer Reservations System (CRS) Regulations; Statements of General Policy

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice extending comment period.

SUMMARY: The Department has issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that proposes to readopt and amend its existing rules governing airline computer reservations systems (CRSs) and to clarify the requirements of its Statements of General Policy on travel agency disclosure of any agency service fees.

DATES: The Department is now extending the due date for comments and reply comments on this notice of proposed rulemaking to March 16, 2003, and May 15, 2003, from the original dates of January 14 and February 13, 2003.

ADDRESSES: To make sure your comments and related material are not entered more than once in the docket, please submit them (marked with docket numbers OST-97-2881, OST-97-3014, OST-98-4775 and OST-99-5888) by only one of the following means:

(1) By mail to the Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001.

(2) By hand delivery to room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.

(3) Electronically through the Web Site for the Docket Management System at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Comments must be filed in Dockets OST-97-2881, OST-97-3014, and OST-98-4775 and OST-99-5888, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 7th St. SW., Washington, DC 20590. Late filed comments will be considered to the extent possible.

Due to security procedures in effect since October 2001 on mail deliveries, mail received through the Postal Service may be subject to delays. Commenters should consider using an express mail firm to ensure the timely filing of any comments not submitted electronically or by hand.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Thomas Ray, Office of the General Counsel, 400 Seventh St. SW., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-4731.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department has begun a rulemaking to reexamine whether it should maintain its existing rules governing CRS operations. Our rules have a sunset date, currently March 31, 2003, to ensure that we would reexamine the need for the rules and their effectiveness. 67 FR 14846 (March 28, 2002). We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that set forth our tentative conclusions on whether the rules should be readopted, whether we should extend the rules to cover the sale of airline tickets through the Internet, and whether we should clarify our full-fare advertising policy insofar as it concerns the disclosure of travel agency service fees. 67 FR 69366 (November 15, 2002). Comments and reply comments were due sixty days and ninety days, respectively, after the notice's publication.

Nineteen of the parties have filed a petition to extend these comment periods and to extend the rules' existing sunset date. These petitioners, Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, Interactive Travel Services Association, American Society of Travel Agents, National Business Travel Association, National Consumers League, Navigant International, Rosenbluth International, Tzell Travel, Maritz TQ3, Colwick Travel, Protravel International, Austin Travel, Corporate Travel Planners, Altour International, World Travel BTI, Compass Travel, and Sea Gate Travel Group, ask that we provide an additional sixty days for comments and an additional thirty days for reply

comments. They also ask that we extend the rules' sunset date to September 30, 2003. They request us to grant their petition by December 3 so that they may better plan the preparation of their comments.

In support of their request for more time, the petitioners note that our notice of proposed rulemaking is very long and requests the parties to address a large number of issues. They contend that the comment periods provided by the notice of proposed rulemaking will not enable them to prepare meaningful comments on the issues. They point out that the initial comment period includes the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day holidays. And they allege that our proposals, if adopted, would require the systems, airlines, and many travel agencies to make significant changes in their operations.

We have determined that it would be reasonable to give commenters more time for preparing their responses to the advance notice. The issues are complex, and our notice of proposed rulemaking is lengthy. As the petitioners point out, the comment period includes three major holidays. Extending the comment period should help us, by enabling the parties to prepare comments that thoroughly analyze the issues raised by our notice of proposed rulemaking. We will therefore give commenters an additional sixty days for the comments and thirty days for reply comments. These extensions should give them adequate time for preparing responses to our notice and the comments filed by other parties without unduly delaying the completion of this rulemaking. These comment periods will be comparable to those established by us in our last major reexamination of the rules. 56 FR 12586 (March 26, 1991). As a result, we are making the comments due on March 16 instead of January 14, 2003, and the reply comments due on May 15 instead of February 13.

We recognize that Continental, Orbitz, and Northwest have filed oppositions to the request for an extension that argue that we should not delay our decision on new rules, since the current rules allegedly restrict competition. We appreciate the need to proceed without undue delay, but we think the public interest will be best served by ensuring that the commenters have an opportunity to thoroughly address and analyze the issues.

We are not now prepared to propose another extension of the rules' sunset date. We will consider that issue early next year and see no reason to act on that matter at this time.

Issued in Washington, DC on December 2, 2002.

Kirk K. Van Tine,
General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 02-30951 Filed 12-3-02; 4:39 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

18 CFR Part 284

[Docket No. RM96-1-024]

Standards for Business Practices of Interstate Natural Gas Pipelines

November 29, 2002.

AGENCY: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its regulations governing standards for conducting business practices with interstate natural gas pipelines. The Commission is proposing to incorporate by reference the most recent version of the standards, Version 1.6, promulgated July 31, 2002, by the Wholesale Gas Quadrant of the North American Energy Standards Board (NAESB) and the standards governing partial day recalls (recommendations R02002 and R02002-2), adopted October 31, 2002. These standards can be obtained from NAESB at 1100 Louisiana, Suite 3625, Houston, TX 77002, 713-356-0060, <http://www.naesb.org>.

DATES: Comments are due January 8, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington DC 20426.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Goldenberg, Office of the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, 202-502-8685.

Marvin Rosenberg, Office of Markets, Tariffs, and Rates, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, 202-502-8292.

Kay Morice, Office of Markets, Tariffs, and Rates, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE.,

Washington, DC 20426, 202-502-6507.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

1. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) proposes to amend § 284.12 of its open access regulations governing standards for conducting business practices and electronic communications with interstate natural gas pipelines. The Commission is proposing to adopt the most recent version, Version 1.6, of the consensus standards promulgated by the Wholesale Gas Quadrant of the North American Energy Standards Board (WGQ), and the WGQ standards governing partial day recalls. The proposed rule is intended to benefit the public by adopting the most recent and up-to-date standards governing electronic communication and by adopting standards that will facilitate partial day recalls.

Background

2. Since 1996, in the Order No. 587 series,¹ the Commission has adopted regulations to standardize the business practices and communication methodologies of interstate pipelines in order to create a more integrated and efficient pipeline grid. In this series of orders, the Commission incorporated by reference consensus standards developed by the WGQ (formerly the Gas Industry Standards Board or GISB), a private consensus standards developer composed of members from all segments of the natural gas industry. The WGQ is an accredited standards organization

¹ Standards For Business Practices Of Interstate Natural Gas Pipelines, Order No. 587, 61 FR 39053 (Jul. 26, 1996), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.038 (Jul. 17, 1996), Order No. 587-B, 62 FR 5521 (Feb. 6, 1997), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.046 (Jan. 30, 1997), Order No. 587-C, 62 FR 10684 (Mar. 10, 1997), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.050 (Mar. 4, 1997), Order No. 587-G, 63 FR 20072 (Apr. 23, 1998), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.062 (Apr. 16, 1998), Order No. 587-H, 63 FR 39509 (July 23, 1998), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.063 (July 15, 1998); Order No. 587-I, 63 FR 53565 (Oct. 6, 1998), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.067 (Sept. 29, 1998), Order No. 587-K, 64 FR 17276 (Apr. 9, 1999), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.072 (Apr. 2, 1999); Order No. 587-M, 65 FR 77285 (Dec. 11, 2000), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.114 (Dec. 11, 2000); Order No. 587-N, 67 FR 11906 (Mar. 18, 2002), III FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles ¶ 31.125 (Mar. 11, 2002), Order No. 587-O, 67 FR 30788 (May 8, 2002), III FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles ¶ 31.129 (May 1, 2002).

under the auspices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

3. On October 7, 2002, the WGQ filed with the Commission a report informing the Commission that it had adopted a new version of its standards, Version 1.6. The WGQ reports that while Version 1.5 contained many of the standards designed to support Order No. 637,² Version 1.6 includes additional standards that support Order No. 637. It states: "development of standards to support FERC Order No. 637 was given the highest priority by all NAESB subcommittees and task forces." The WGQ further reports that the surety assessment performed by the Sandia National Laboratories on the GISB EDM (Electronic Delivery Mechanisms) standards was accepted by GISB and forwarded to the EDM Subcommittee for review and development of standards in October 2000. It states that some of the Sandia recommendations were implemented in Version 1.5, and the remainder were implemented in Version 1.6. Finally, the WGQ reports that work continues on requests for both new and revised business practices, information requirements, code value assignments, technical implementation and mapping or interpretations.

4. In Order No. 587-N,³ the Commission adopted a regulation requiring that pipelines permit releasing shippers to recall released capacity and renominate that recalled capacity at any of the nomination opportunities provided by the pipelines. The Commission established a two-phased implementation for this regulation. In the first phase, the Commission established an interim schedule under which releasing shippers could recall capacity, as long as the recall did not involve a partial or flowing day recall (a recall of scheduled gas after the time at which it began to flow). Pipelines implemented the first phase as of July 1, 2002. In the second phase, the Commission provided the WGQ with six months to develop standards dealing with the operational details of permitting partial or flowing day recalls, in particular the method by which capacity would be allocated between releasing and replacement shippers. The Commission established October 1, 2002, as the date by which the WGQ and other industry members should submit a report and further provided for

² Regulation of Short-Term Natural Gas Transportation Services, Order No. 637, 65 FR 10156 (Feb. 25, 2000), FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles [July 1996-December 2000] ¶ 31.091 (Feb. 9, 2000).

³ Order No. 587-N, 67 FR 11906 (Mar. 18, 2002), III FERC Stats. & Regs. Regulations Preambles ¶ 31.125 (Mar. 11, 2002).