energy marketing and brokering business continues to grow, it will find it necessary to make additional investments in its energy-related companies of up to $500 million. For this reason, under sections 9 and 10 of the Act, NU is seeking authorization to invest up to an additional $500 million in new and existing rule 58 energy-related companies through the Authorization Period, including Guarantees. NU and NUEI also request that, at the end of the proposed Authorization Period, any investments made in those companies, in excess of the rule 58 limit, be permitted to continue when any unused portion must expire.[4]

Secondly, Applicants now seek an order authorizing the issuance of guarantees up to an aggregate amount of $750 million for their nonutility subsidiaries and affiliates, including any Nonutility Subsidiaries that may be formed or acquired during the Authorization Period. Through June 30, 2004, the Commission authorized NU and NUEI to, among other things, issue guarantees and similar forms of credits support or enhancements for NU and NUEI's Nonutility Subsidiaries in an aggregate amount not to exceed $500 million by its order dated September 30, 2003. Holding Co. Act Release No. 27730 (Sept. 30, 2003). The authorization sought, and described above, to invest in rule 58 energy-related companies, under section 9 and 10 of the Act, and this authorization for NU and NUEI to provide credit support to its competitive affiliates up to the Guarantee Limit will enable NU to grow its competitive businesses as appropriate and necessary to continue to compete with other energy marketing companies.

NU also seeks authority for Select to engage in a variety of activities related to its energy marketing and brokering business, including: (i) The brokering, marketing and trading of other energy commodities, including gas and electric transmission entitlements, weather hedging products, emission credits and financial derivative products (*i.e.*, "paper products'') in respect of any of these commodities (including, but not limited to, hedges, swaps, forwards, options and the like), anywhere in the world, but request the Commission to reserve jurisdiction on the provision of such services outside of the United States, Mexico and Canada, and (ii) the rendering of energy management services and demand-side management services anywhere in the world.

NU also requests authorization to increase the aggregate amount it may invest in EWGs to up to $1.0 billion during the Authorization Period (an amount that would include NU's current investment of $449 million in its only EWG). The Commission previously has authorized NU's investment in EWGs in an amount in excess of the 50% safe harbor limit provided by rule 53, by order dated March 7, 2000 ("March 7, 2000 Order''). Holding Co. Act Release No. 27148 (Mar. 7, 2000). NU states that the ownership of additional generation, on satisfactory terms, is important to support NUEI's energy trading and marketing business. NU further states that the proposed EWG investment limit represents approximately 125% of NU's average "consolidated retained earnings'' as defined in rule 53(a)(1), for the four quarterly periods ending September 30, 2003, and that the proposed investment limit of $1 billion compares favorably with the EWG investment limits authorized by the Commission.[5]

Finally, NU seeks authority to engage in internal corporate reorganizations to better organize its Nonutility Subsidiaries and investments. NU currently engages, directly or indirectly through its Nonutility Subsidiaries, in certain nonutility businesses. No authority is sought to make new investments or to change the organization for the Utility Subsidiaries. "Utility Subsidiary'' for the purposes of this section means the NU Utility Companies and Yankee Gas. NU requests approval to consolidate or otherwise reorganize all or any part of its direct and indirect ownership interests in Nonutility Subsidiaries, and the activities and functions related to these investments.[6] The internal transactions would be undertaken to eliminate corporate complexities, to combine related business segments for staffing and management purposes, to eliminate administrative costs, to achieve tax savings, or for other ordinary and necessary business purposes. NU requests authority to engage in such transactions through the Authorization Period. The transactions proposed will not involve the sale, transfer or other disposition of any utility assets of any Utility Subsidiary to any other person, nor will they involve any change in the corporate ownership of, or involve any restructuring of, the Utility Subsidiaries.

For the Commission, by the Division of Investment Management, under delegated authority.

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

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investment is in the form of NU Guarantees ($258 million). As of September 30, 2003, NU's investment in Select and SENY, including Guarantees, computed for purposes of rule 58, aggregate to approximately $846 million of NU's aggregate investment in rule 58 companies of $943 million. Of that amount, Guarantees issued for NU's nonutility subsidiaries made up approximately $258 million with guarantees for Select and SENY accounting for $184.5 million.

[4] Applicants state that no authorization is sought for off-balance sheet financing nor are any of the Applicants currently involved in such financing. Furthermore, Select does not own or deal in off balance sheet assets or exercise control over any assets that are not fully disclosed.

[5] The proposed aggregate EWG investment would be equal to approximately 125% of NU's average consolidated retained earnings for the four quarters ended September 30, 2003. The proposal would be an increase from the current authorization of approximately 83%. *See* March 7, 2000, Order.

[6] Applicants state that, to effect any consolidations or other reorganizations, NU or NUEI may either contribute the equity securities of one Nonutility Subsidiary to another Nonutility Subsidiary or sell (or cause a Nonutility Subsidiary to sell) the equity securities or all or part of the assets of one Nonutility Subsidiary to another one. The transactions may also take the form of a Nonutility Subsidiary selling or transferring the equity securities of a subsidiary or all or part of such subsidiary's assets as a dividend to another Nonutility Subsidiary, and the acquisition, directly or indirectly, of the equity securities or assets of the subsidiary, either by purchase or by receipt of a dividend. The purchasing Nonutility Subsidiary in any transaction structured as an intrasystem sale of equity securities or assets may execute and deliver its promissory note evidencing all or a portion of the consideration given.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Data Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Small Business Administration's intentions to request approval on a new and/or currently approved information collection.

DATES: Submit comments on or before April 27, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send all comments regarding whether this information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the function of the agency, whether the burden estimates are accurate, and if there are ways to minimize the estimated burden and enhance the quality of the collection, to George Solomon, Supervisory Business Development Officer, Office of Business and Community Initiatives, Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW., Suite 6100, Washington, DC 20416.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Solomon, Supervisory Business

Development Officer, 202–205–7426 or Curtis B. Rich, Management Analyst, 202–205–7030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: "Economic Impact.''

Description of Respondents: Small Business Client small business owners & employees, prospective entrepreneurs and other students of enterprise.

Form No: 2214.

Annual Responses: 14,000.

Annual Burden: 2,333.

Jacqueline White,

Chief, Administrative Information Branch.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP): Import Statistics Relating to Competitive Need Limitations; Invitation for Public Comment on Possible De Minimis Waivers and Redesignations

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice is to inform the public of interim 2003 import statistics relating to Competitive Need Limitations (CNL) under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Public comments are invited by 5 p.m., March 31, 2004, regarding possible *de minimis* CNL waivers with respect to particular articles, and possible redesignations under the GSP program of articles currently subject to CNLs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact the GSP Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 1724 F Street, NW., Room F–220, Washington, DC 20508. The telephone number is (202) 395–6971.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Competitive Need Limitations

The GSP program provides for the duty-free importation of designated articles when imported from designated beneficiary developing countries (BDCs). The GSP program is authorized by title V of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2461, *et seq.*), as amended (the "1974 Act''), and is implemented in accordance with Executive Order 11888 of November 24, 1975, as modified by subsequent Executive Orders and Presidential Proclamations. Section 503(c)(2)(A) of the 1974 Act provides for CNLs on duty-free treatment under the GSP program. When the President determines that a BDC exported to the United States during a calendar year either (1) a quantity of a GSP-eligible article having a value in excess of the applicable amount for that year ($110 million for 2003), or (2) a quantity of a GSP-eligible article having a value equal to or greater than 50 percent of the value of total U.S. imports of the article from all countries (the "50 percent CNL''), the President shall terminate GSP duty-free treatment for that article from that BDC by no later than July 1 of the next calendar year.

II. Discretionary Decisions

A. De Minimis Waivers

Section 503(c)(2)(F) of the 1974 Act provides the President with discretion to waive the 50 percent CNL with respect to an eligible article imported from a BDC if the value of total imports of that article from all countries during the calendar year did not exceed the applicable amount for that year ($16.5 million for 2003).

B. Redesignation of Eligible Articles

Where imports of an eligible article from a BDC ceased to receive duty-free treatment due to exceeding the CNL in a prior year, section 503(c)(2)(C) of the 1974 Act provides the President with discretion to redesignate such an article for duty-free treatment if imports in the most recently completed calendar year did not exceed the CNLs.

III. Implementation of Competitive Need Limitations, Waivers, and Redesignations

Exclusions from GSP duty-free treatment where CNLs have been exceeded will be effective July 1, 2004. Decisions on these matters, as well as decisions with respect to *de minimis* waivers and redesignations, will be based on full 2003 calendar year import statistics.

IV. Interim 2003 Import Statistics

In order to provide advance notice of articles that may exceed the CNLs for 2003, and to afford an opportunity for comment regarding *de minimis* waivers and redesignations, interim import statistics covering the first 10 months of 2003 are included with this notice. Full calendar year 2003 data may be obtained from the website of the U.S. International Trade Commission at *http://dataweb.usitc.gov/.*

The following lists contain, for each article, the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) subheading and beneficiary country of origin, the value of imports of such article for the first 10 months of 2003, and the percentage of total imports of that article from all countries. The flags indicate the status of GSP eligibility. Articles marked with an "*'' are those that have been excluded from GSP eligibility for the entire past calendar year. Articles marked with a "D'' are those that, based on interim 2003 data, may be eligible for a *de minimis* waiver of the 50 percent CNL.

List I shows GSP-eligible articles from BDCs that have already exceeded the CNL of $110 million in 2003. Those articles without a flag are articles that were GSP-eligible during 2003 but stand to lose GSP duty-free treatment on July 1, 2004, unless a waiver is granted. Such waivers are required to have been previously requested in the 2003 GSP Annual Review.

List II shows GSP-eligible articles from BDCs that (1) have not yet exceeded, but are approaching, the $110 million CNL for the period January-October 2003, or (2) are close to or above the 50 percent CNL. Depending on final calendar year 2003 import data, these articles stand to lose GSP duty-free treatment on July 1, 2004, unless a waiver is granted. Such waivers are required to have been previously requested in the 2003 GSP Annual Review.

List III is a subset of List II. List III identifies GSP-eligible articles from BDCs that are near or above the 50 percent CNL, but that may be eligible for a *de minimis* waiver of the 50 percent CNL. Actual eligibility for *de minimis* waivers will depend on final calendar year 2003 import data. Each year, *de minimis* waivers are considered automatically without a petition and public comments are accepted.

List IV shows GSP-eligible articles that are currently not receiving GSP duty-free treatment, but that have import levels (based on interim 2003 data) below the CNLs and thus may be eligible for redesignation pursuant to the President's discretionary authority. Articles with a "D'' exceed the 50 percent CNL and would require both a *de minimis* waiver and redesignation to receive GSP duty-free treatment. The list may also contain articles that may not be redesignated until certain conditions are fulfilled, as where, for example, GSP eligibility for an article was administratively suspended because of deficiencies in a country's protection of worker or intellectual property rights. Redesignation requests are normally made in the annual review, unless made in conjunction with remedying the deficiencies.

The lists appended to this notice are provided for informational purposes only. The attached lists are computer-