

review under Section 6(b) of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, dated September 30, 1993. This rule is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.*, does not apply because the rule applies to the internal process of Federal agencies and is not a significant revision of the FAR. A Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis has, therefore, not been prepared.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply because the changes to the FAR do not impose information collection requirements that require the approval of the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

List of Subjects in 48 CFR Parts 4 and 53

Government procurement.

Dated: December 4, 2003.

Laura Auletta,

Director, Acquisition Policy Division.

■ Therefore, DoD, GSA, and NASA amend 48 CFR parts 4 and 53 as set forth below:

■ 1. The authority citation for 48 CFR parts 4 and 53 is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 40 U.S.C. 121(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

PART 4—ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

■ 2. Amend section 4.601 by adding a sentence to the end of paragraph (a); and removing “from the computer file” from the introductory text of paragraphs (c) and (d). The added text reads as follows:

4.601 Record requirements.

(a) * * * This file shall be accessible to the public using FPDS-NG.

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■ 3. Amend section 4.602 by revising paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) to read as follows:

4.602 Federal Procurement Data System.

(a) The FPDS provides a comprehensive mechanism for assembling, organizing, and presenting contract placement data for the Federal Government. Federal agencies will now report data directly to the Federal Procurement Data System—Next Generation (FPDS-NG), which collects, processes, and disseminates official statistical data on Federal contracting. The data provide—

(1) A basis for recurring and special reports to the President, the Congress,

the General Accounting Office, Federal executive agencies, and the general public;

(2) A means of measuring and assessing the impact of Federal contracting on the Nation’s economy and the extent to which small, veteran-owned small, service-disabled veteran-owned small, HUBZone small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small business concerns are sharing in Federal contracts; and

(3) Information for other policy and management control purposes, and for public access.

(b) The FPDS Web site, *https://www.fpds.gov*, provides instructions for submitting data. It also provides a complete list of departments, agencies, and other entities that submit data to the FPDS, as well as technical and end-user guidance, and a computer-based tutorial.

(c)(1) Data collection points in each agency shall submit FPDS-required data on contract actions directly to FPDS-NG. Agencies must report all transactions over \$2,500 and modifications to those transactions regardless of dollar value.

(2) Agencies participating under the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program (see Subpart 19.10) shall report as an individual contract action all awards, regardless of dollar value, in the designated industry groups.

(3) Agencies may choose to report transactions at or below \$2,500, including those made using the Governmentwide commercial purchase card, except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(4) Until September 30, 2004, agencies shall report contract actions between \$2,500 and \$25,000 either in individual or summary form. After September 30, 2004, agencies shall submit only individual contract action reports.

(d) The contracting officer must identify and report (if it is not pre-populated by the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database), a Contractor Identification Number for each successful offeror. A Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, which is a nine-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services to an establishment, is the Contractor Identification Number for Federal contractors. The DUNS number reported must identify the successful offeror’s name and address exactly as stated in the offer and resultant contract. The contracting officer must ask the offeror to provide its DUNS number by using either the provision prescribed in paragraph (a) of 4.603 or the FAR clause

prescribed at 4.1104. If the successful offeror does not provide its number, the contracting officer must contact the offeror and assist them in obtaining the DUNS number.

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■ 4. Amend section 4.603 by revising paragraph (a)(1) to read as follows:

4.603 Solicitation provisions.

(a) * * *

(1) Are expected to result in a requirement for the generation of an individual contract action report (see 4.602(c)); and

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PART 53—FORMS

53.204-2 [Reserved]

■ 5. Remove and reserve section 53.204-2.

53.301-279 and 53.301-281 [Removed]

■ 6. Remove sections 53.301-279 and 53.301-281.

[FR Doc. 03-30474 Filed 12-10-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

48 CFR Part 8

[FAC 2001-18; FAR Case 2003-001; Item IV]

RIN 9000-AJ62

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Increased Federal Prison Industries, Inc. Waiver Threshold

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council (Councils) have adopted as final, without change, an interim rule amending the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to increase the blanket waiver threshold for small dollar value purchases from Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (FPI) by Federal agencies. By increasing this threshold to \$2,500, Federal agencies are not required to make purchases from FPI of products on FPI’s Schedule that are at or below this threshold.

DATES: *Effective Date:* December 11, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The FAR Secretariat at (202) 501-4755, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Ms. Linda Nelson, Procurement Analyst, at (202) 501-1900. Please cite FAC 2001-18, FAR case 2003-001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The Councils have agreed to a final rule increasing the FPI clearance exception threshold at FAR 8.606(e) from \$25 to \$2,500 and eliminating the criterion that delivery is required within 10 days. The objective of the rule is to increase the dollar threshold necessary to obtain a clearance from FPI. By increasing this threshold to \$2,500, Federal agencies are not required to make purchases from FPI of products on FPI's Schedule that are at or below this threshold. Federal agencies, however, may continue to consider and purchase products from FPI that are at or below \$2,500. FPI is a mandatory acquisition program established under 18 U.S.C. 4124. Agencies are still required to purchase products on FPI's Schedule from FPI above the \$2,500 threshold unless a clearance is obtained pursuant to FAR 8.605.

DoD, GSA, and NASA published an interim rule in the **Federal Register** at 68 FR 28094, May 22, 2003. Three respondents submitted public comments. These comments are discussed below. The Councils concluded that the interim rule should be converted to a final rule without change.

Comment 1: Respondent concurred with the rule.

Comment 2: Respondent wanted assurance that there are no other conflicts with existing wording of the FAR (e.g., FAR 8.603) as a result of the increase in the blanket waiver threshold to \$2,500. The respondent believes that the FAR should explicitly state that agencies are not required to make purchases from FPI that are at or below \$2,500, if that is the intent. In addition, the Defense FAR Supplement (DFARS) should state that the requirement for a comparability determination does not apply to purchases at or below \$2,500.

Councils' response: This rule has created no conflicts with other wording of the FAR. The rule merely increased the dollar threshold for an existing exception to FPI clearance requirements. As was previously the case, Federal agencies are not required (but are permitted) to purchase products

from FPI if the dollar value of the purchase is at or below the threshold specified in FAR 8.606(e). The purchase priorities specified in FAR 8.603 have not changed, and apply only in situations where FPI and JWOD agencies produce identical supplies or services.

The recommended DFARS change is outside the scope of this case. DoD published a final DFARS rule on November 14, 2003 (68 FR 64559), to address DoD-unique requirements for purchase of products from FPI.

Comment 3: Respondent stated that language should be included in the rule to make it clear that DoD activities are now governed by the changes legislated in Section 811 of Public Law 107-107 and Section 819 of Public Law 107-314, the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003, respectively. Under these laws, the UNICOR waiver process has been effectively eliminated for DoD activities. If a DoD contracting officer determines that UNICOR products are not comparable in terms of quality, price, and delivery time, the activity is not required to seek a UNICOR waiver, regardless of the dollar amount of the acquisition. The concern is that DoD contracting officers and UNICOR private sector commissioned sales representatives may interpret this FAR change to mean that DoD must request a UNICOR waiver when the acquisition is over \$2,500. To prevent such a misunderstanding, it is vital that references to the above public laws and/or the ensuring DFARS regulations be included in the language that announces this change to the waiver limit of FAR 8.606(e).

Councils' response: The Councils recognize that DoD is governed by separate statutory requirements with regard to purchase of products from FPI (UNICOR), but do not believe additional clarification is required for the FAR. Existing DoD policy on this subject can be found in DFARS Subpart 208.6 (48 CFR Chapter 2, Subpart 208.6). As stated in the response to Comment 2 above, DoD published revisions to DFARS Subpart 208.6 (48 CFR Chapter 2, Subpart 208.6) on November 14, 2003 (68 FR 64559).

This is not a significant regulatory action and, therefore, was not subject to review under Section 6(b) of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, dated September 30, 1993. This rule is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to this rule. This final rule

does not constitute a significant FAR revision within the meaning of FAR 1.501 and Public Law 98-577, and publication for public comments is not required. However, the Councils will consider comments from small entities concerning the affected FAR Part 8, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 610. Interested parties must submit such comments separately and should cite 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.* (FAC 2001-18, FAR case 2003-001), in correspondence. No comments were received on the Regulatory Flexibility Act Statement in the interim rule.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply because the changes to the FAR do not impose information collection requirements that require the approval of the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

List of Subjects in 48 CFR Part 8

Government procurement.

Dated: December 4, 2003.

Laura Auletta,

Director, Acquisition Policy Division.

Interim Rule Adopted as Final Without Change

■ Accordingly, DoD, GSA, and NASA adopt the interim rule amending 48 CFR part 8 which was published in the **Federal Register** at 68 FR 28094, May 22, 2003, as a final rule without change.

Authority: 40 U.S.C. 121(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

48 CFR Part 9

[FAC 2001-18; FAR Case 2002-010; Item V]

RIN 9000-AJ48

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Debarment and Suspension—Order Placement and Option Exercise

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.