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To: Jennifer Wood Inforeg/OMB/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Comments Regarding Federal Regulations Including Federal Regulations Affecting Small Business

We write this e-mail as a small business concern. The owner of our company recently watched the Presidents speech at the Woman Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century Summit (March 19, 2002). Our company is engaged in mechanical logging, trucking and helicopter operations. We employ about 30 employees during the busiest part of our year. This concern is in response to a government requirement, not so much as a government regulation.

We contract helicopter services to the Federal government; the U.S.F.S., the Department of the Interiors Office of Aircraft Services, etc. A couple of years ago we finished upgrading all of our aircraft radios to those, which utilize split frequencies. This was a new requirement (about three years ago) of our contracts with these agencies. We now understand the Federal government has a new plan which will require us to change all of these same radios to digital radios. Understand, we are not working on highly secretive Department of Defense operations, the majority of our work with these agencies is fire-fighting, wildlife herding, counting and capture, snow surveys and some law enforcement work, i.e.; marijuana surveillance over national forests and parks. My understanding after talking to radio technicians is that digital radios provide the capability to scramble transmissions. However, their performance is in question in terms of transmission range, especially in mountainous regions. The cost of these new radios is currently about \$13,000.00 per radio. We have four aircraft, translating into \$52,000.00. Not including a backup radio, as we certainly cant afford any downtime in the event of a problem.

In addition to our increased costs, we are greatly concerned about the incredible amount of money the Federal Government will be spending in upgrading all of their radios, as digital radios will not be compatible with the current radios in use. Another compatibility problem stems from the fact that most states, and local governments will probably not be able to afford the updates. In wildland fire-fighting situations Federal Agencies and state/local agencies often work together. This seems to us to be an incredible waste of taxpayer money. We certainly understand that if we, as a contractor, wish to work for the Government we must meet their contract requirements. However, to spend this kind of money on a project that appears to be a case of organizations simply wanting the latest and greatest is completely unnecessary.

We appreciate your time and consideration on this matter, and look forward

to a reply.

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