(This order is issued whenever the line attorneys inform you that a tentative agreement has been reached in a case, usually a case which is already in damages, or a case which is technically in entitlement but the parties are settling by litigative risk settlement. This order is only for entitlement/damages cases, not fees. <u>See</u> the other letters, memos, etc regarding how the 15 week time period is to work & how it has worked.)

## OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

## **ORDER**

[Pursuant to the hearing conducted in this case on [DATE]][Pursuant to the P/R/parties status report dated, [DATE]][Pursuant to the parties telephonic communication with this court on [DATE]], the parties have informed the court that they have reached a tentative agreement in this case as of [DATE]. It is the court's understanding, based on information provided by the Department of Justice, that once settlement terms have been agreed upon, the Department's internal approval process will take **no more than** fifteen (15) weeks. Once approval for settlement is received, respondent shall provide petitioner(s) with the joint stipulation for signature. The court also understands that in less complex cases or where the agreed upon amount is less than \$500,000, the Department's preparation time should be substantially less. Therefore, it is ordered that:

1) Respondent shall, within fifteen (15) weeks, **by [DATE]**, send petitioner(s) the joint stipulation for petitioner(s)' signature. **Additionally, respondent shall file a status report advising the court of the date the stipulation was forwarded to petitioner**.

If this deadline cannot be met, respondent shall move the court, **in writing**, for an extension of time, stating with specificity the reasons for noncompliance.

- 2) Petitioner(s) shall, **within thirty (30) days** after the receipt of the stipulation, either return the stipulation to the respondent and file a status report notifying the court of the same, or file a status report detailing the status of the settlement.
- 3) Respondent shall file the signed stipulation within fifteen (15) days after its receipt from petitioner(s). Respondent shall file a status report informing the court of any delays in the filing of the stipulation and the reasons therefore.

The parties may incorporate attorney's fees and costs into the final settlement package. <u>However</u>, the negotiation of fees and costs **shall not** serve as an acceptable reason for delaying the filing of the stipulation. If negotiation of fees and costs will extend the fifteen (15) week period, parties should go forward with the stipulation process, with the intention of resolving the issue of attorney's fees and costs after the conclusion of the case.

IT IS SO ORDERED.	
	Comp. I. Collidering
	Gary J. Golkiewicz
	Chief Special Master