



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Program Guidance Letter 10-02

Date: February 24, 2010

From: Manager, Airports Financial Assistance Division,
APP-500

Reply to Attn. of: Nancy S. Williams
202-267-8822

To: PGL Distribution List

We are issuing this Program Guidance Letter on Buy American requirements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank J. San Martin".

Frank J. San Martin

Guidance for Buy American on Airport Improvement Program (AIP) or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects.

In accepting AIP or ARRA funding, grant recipients are certifying that they will not acquire (or permit any contractor or subcontractor) to use any steel or manufactured products produced outside the United States on any portion of the project for which funds are provided, unless otherwise approved by the FAA. Therefore, for the AIP or ARRA funded portion of a project, grant recipients must either:

1. Certify, in writing, all products are wholly produced in the US of US materials, or
2. Request a waiver to use non-US produced products, or
3. Certify that all equipment that is being used on the project is on the Nationwide Buy American conformance list.

The AIP funded portion of a project includes the grant recipient's local share.

Types of Waivers

There are four types of waivers to Buy American:

1. Public interest waiver;
2. Insufficient quantity AND quality for ARRA (AIP projects allow waivers for insufficient quantity OR quality);
3. 60% or more of the components and subcomponents in the facility or equipment are of US origin and final assembly is in the US; or
4. Applying Buy American increases the cost of the overall project by more than 25%.

Many pieces of equipment are constructed with some non-US produced components or subcomponents. Therefore, it is expected that the majority of grants will have waivers issued unless the project is constructed of materials that already have a nationwide waiver.

Nationwide Waiver

Much of the equipment that is frequently used on AIP or ARRA projects has been reviewed by FAA Headquarters and a nationwide waiver has been issued. The Nationwide Buy American conformance list is posted on the www.faa.gov website at the following address:

http://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/procurement/federal_contract_provisions/
by clicking the tab, "Equipment Meeting Buy American Requirements"

If the equipment is on the nationwide waiver list, no additional waiver is required.

Who can Issue Waivers

Only FAA headquarters may issue waivers for reasons 1 and 2. FAA field offices (Regional Offices and/or Airports District Offices) may issue waivers for reasons 3 and 4.

For block grant state projects, the FAA must issue the waivers. Block grant states are not allowed to issue a waiver.

Defining the Project, Facility and Equipment, and Final Assembly Location in the 60%/US final assembly waiver

The waiver can be considered if “at least 60% of the cost of the components and subcomponents in the **facility or equipment** are produced in the United States and the final assembly of the facility or equipment has occurred in the United States.” The correct application of the terms is discussed below.

Project

The “**Project**” is generally the project that is being bid. The “Project” does not extend over multiple grants or phases, even though the overall project may be phased or may be built in multiple bid packages.

Facility or Equipment

- For a building, the portion of the building that is being funded under the AIP or ARRA grant is the “**facility**” listed in the waiver.
- For other projects, the bid items as described in the latest edition of FAA Advisory Circular 5370-10 will generally be the “**equipment**” referred to in the waiver except for airfield electrical equipment.
- For airfield electrical equipment, the “L-” items listed in the Addendum to FAA Advisory Circular 5345-53C, latest edition will generally be the “**equipment**” referred to in the waiver.
- For a vehicle or single piece of equipment like a snow plow or ARFF vehicle, the single vehicle itself is the “**equipment.**”

Final Assembly Location and Labor Exclusion

Final assembly is the substantial transformation of the various components and subcomponents into the equipment. For a building, the final assembly is actual construction of the building.

- For any project other than a building project, the final assembly location is the location where the equipment is assembled, **not the project site itself.**
- For a building, the final assembly location is the airport building site.

In any calculation of Buy American percentage, the labor for the final assembly is excluded. This is because the Buy American statute is based on the cost of materials and equipment, not labor. For a building, this means that only the costs of the materials as they are delivered to the airport site are considered when calculating US and non-US component and subcomponent costs. For equipment, the costs of the final assembly at the manufacturing site are excluded.

Common Materials that are waived or excluded from Buy American - Cement, Concrete, Asphalt and Steel

Cement and concrete is excluded from the Buy American preference requirements (although the steel used for reinforcement, ties, stirrups, etc. must meet Buy American.)

Asphalt and other petroleum products are waived as an excepted item under AMS Guidance T3.6.4.1.e: Foreign Acquisition – Definitions identifying Asphalt as a petroleum product.

Steel is specifically identified in the statute. Therefore, all rebar and discrete, identifiable steel components must be manufactured in the United States.

FAA Waiver

After the FAA has determined that the final assembly location is in the US and the percent of US components and subcomponents is above 60%, a waiver may be issued. **The waiver is for the single project – not a nationwide waiver.**

What Information is required to Issue a Waiver (AIP and ARRA) and for the Federal Register Notice (ARRA)

For waiver type 3, a waiver can be considered if “at least 60% of the cost of the components and subcomponents in the **facility or equipment** are produced in the United States and the final assembly of the facility or equipment has occurred in the United States.”

Grant recipients must request waivers from FAA in writing, with sufficient supporting information. Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring their waiver request is complete and accurate using project specific information provided directly by the contractor or the contractor’s supplier.

The FAA will conduct its review and approval based on the information provided by the grant recipient.

The information that must be provided for either equipment or for a building:

- Project Number
- Project Name
- Airport Name
- Total Project Cost
- Total Equipment or Bid Item Cost for which the waiver is being requested
- Total Equipment or Bid Item Cost excluding labor for final assembly.

For equipment, the following additional information is required:

- The equipment or bid item for which the waiver is being requested
- The manufacturer and country of origin of the equipment or bid item.
- The location of the final assembly of the equipment or bid item (not the airport site)

- The cost of the US components and subcomponents for the equipment or bid item for which the waiver is being requested
- The cost of the non-US components and subcomponents for the equipment or bid item for which the waiver is being requested
- The resulting percent of US and non-US components

For a building, the following additional information is required:

- The building (called the facility in the Buy American statute) for which the waiver is being requested
- The manufacturer and country of origin of the US and non-US materials that will be used in the building,
- For a building, the location of the final assembly is the airport site
- The cost of the US components and subcomponents for the equipment or bid item for which the waiver is being requested
- The cost of the non-US components and subcomponents for the equipment or bid item for which the waiver is being requested
- The resulting percent of US and non-US components

Grant recipients are urged to submit waiver requests as early as possible.

Waivers that are issued on ARRA projects must be included in a Federal Register notice, which will generally be published on a quarterly basis.

Sample Letter of Approval of Waiver:

When FAA is satisfied that a waiver may be issued based on the 60%/US final assembly criteria, a letter must be written to the airport sponsor approving the waiver. The text of the letter follows.

A copy of the letter must be forwarded to APP-500 along with a copy of the supporting documentation that was submitted by the airport for the waiver. The information used in the letter will be the basis of the Federal Register notice. The Federal Register notice may include copies of the waiver letters or will be a tabular listing of the waivers. Therefore, regions must forward both a *.pdf copy of the signed letter and an editable copy of the letter.

XXXX Airport
 AIP-Project No. X-XX-XXXX-XX
 Project Name
 Waiver of Buy American Requirements

I have reviewed the request for Waiver of Buy American Requirement submitted XXX for the use of XXXXX equipment on the subject project. The information submitted by the airport for:

Item for which waiver is being issued: i.e L-831 Transformers
 Manufacturer:
 Final Assembly Location:

Percent US Components and Subcomponents:

The information submitted satisfies the requirement for waiver of the requirements of the Buy American per 49 USC Section 50101 based on over 60% of the cost of components and subcomponents to be used in the project being produced in the United States.

The waiver is hereby approved for use on this AIP grant project.

Common Misconceptions

- Belief that if a manufacturer is "FAA-certified" that Buy America has been satisfied. This is not true. The FAA certification certifies that technical standards have been met. However, FAA-certified equipment manufactured outside the U.S. does not meet Buy America provisions of the AIP unless a waiver has been issued.
- Misconception that the North America Free Trade Act (NAFTA) exempts equipment manufactured in Mexico or Canada from "Buy America" requirements. This is not true for AIP or ARRA projects.

Text of Buy American statute from 49 United States Code §50101

§ 50101. Buying goods produced in the United States

(a) **Preference.**— The Secretary of Transportation may obligate an amount that may be appropriated to carry out section [106 \(k\)](#), [44502 \(a\)\(2\)](#), or [44509](#), subchapter I of chapter 471 (except section [47127](#)), or chapter 481 (except sections [48102 \(e\)](#), [48106](#), [48107](#), and [48110](#)) of this title for a project only if steel and manufactured goods used in the project are produced in the United States.

(b) **Waiver.**— The Secretary may waive subsection (a) of this section if the Secretary finds that—

- (1) applying subsection (a) would be inconsistent with the public interest;
- (2) the steel and goods produced in the United States are not produced in a sufficient and reasonably available amount or are not of a satisfactory quality;
- (3) when procuring a facility or equipment under section [44502 \(a\)\(2\)](#) or [44509](#), subchapter I of chapter 471 (except section [47127](#)), or chapter 481 (except sections [48102 \(e\)](#), [48106](#), [48107](#), and [48110](#)) of this title—

(A) the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States is more than 60 percent of the cost of all components of the facility or equipment; and

(B) final assembly of the facility or equipment has occurred in the United States; or

(4) including domestic material will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent.

(c) **Labor Costs.**— In this section, labor costs involved in final assembly are not included in calculating the cost of components.