

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Export Administration

Public Hearings on the Effects of Lifting the Export Ban on Alaskan North Slope Crude Oil

AGENCY: Bureau of Export Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public hearings.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce's Bureau of Export Administration (BXA) is holding public hearings to determine the effects on the environment and the economy of lifting the ban on the export of Alaskan North Slope (ANS) crude oil. BXA is conducting the hearings pursuant to the legislation that the President signed on November 28, which, among other things, requires him to conduct an environmental review, as well as to examine the effect of exports on jobs, consumers, and supplies of oil. This notice identifies the issues on which the Department is interested in obtaining the public's views. It also sets forth the procedures for public participation in the hearings.

DATES: The hearings will be held in Washington, DC, on January 3, 1996; Seattle, Washington, on January 5, 1996; Anchorage, Alaska on January 8, 1996; and Bakersfield, California on January 10, 1996. Requests to speak must be submitted by December 22, 1995. The hearing in Washington, DC will be held in the main auditorium of the Herbert Hoover Building, which is located at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC, 20230. The hearing in Seattle will be held in Building 9 Auditorium, at the NOAA Western Regional Center, which is located at 7600 Sand Point Way, N.E., Seattle, Washington 98115. The hearing in Anchorage will be held in the auditorium of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, which is located at 121 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage,

Alaska. The hearing in Bakersfield will be held at the Sheraton Bakersfield, in the Belridge Room which is located at 5101 California Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93309.

ADDRESSES: Send requests to speak and written copies of the oral presentation to Steven C. Goldman, Acting Director, Office of Chemical and Biological Controls and Treaty Compliance, Room 2093, Bureau of Export Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC, 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bernard Kritzer, Manager, Short Supply Program, Office of Chemical and Biological Controls and Treaty Compliance, Room 2089, Bureau of Export Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC, 20230, Telephone (202) 482-0894.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background and Specific Comments Requested

A. Background

On November 28, 1995, the President signed legislation (S. 395) authorizing exports of Alaskan North Slope (ANS) crude oil when transported in U.S.-flag tankers, unless the President determines that such exports would not be in the national interest. The statute requires the President to consider the results of an "appropriate environmental review" and other issues prior to making his national interest determination.

As amended by S. 395, Section 28(s)(1) of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 185) provides that:

In evaluating whether exports of this oil are in the national interest, the President shall, at a minimum consider:

1. whether exports of ANS crude oil would diminish the total quantity or quality of petroleum available to the United States;
2. the results of an appropriate environmental review, including consideration of appropriate measures to mitigate any potential effects of exports of this oil on the environment, which shall be completed within four months of the date of enactment; and
3. whether exports of this oil are likely to cause sustained material oil supply shortages or sustained oil price increases significantly above world

market levels that would cause sustained material adverse employment effects in the United States or that would cause substantial harm to consumers, including noncontiguous States and Pacific territories.

B. Specific Comments Requested

The U.S. Department of Commerce is holding public hearings as part of its environmental review. The Department is soliciting public comments on the environmental and oil supply and pricing issues described above to ensure that the public has a meaningful opportunity to address the issues identified in the legislation. The Department has decided to conduct four public hearings in order for the public to provide suggestions to the Administration as early as practicable about issues that should be considered in preparing the required review of environmental and economic factors for the President's consideration.

The Department is particularly interested in comments and information on the following questions:

1. Whether exports of ANS crude oil would diminish the total quantity or quality of petroleum available to the United States;
2. Whether exports of ANS crude oil would result in changes in tanker movements out of Valdez, Alaska, and whether such movements would pose any substantial new risks to the environment beyond the risks that may exist under current tanker movements to the U.S. west coast and Hawaii;
3. Whether exports of ANS crude oil would increase imports of foreign oil impacting air quality in PADD V by affecting the level of refinery emissions;
4. Whether exports of ANS crude oil and the projected increases in Alaska and California onshore oil production would affect air quality by affecting oil field emissions and terminal facilities, and;
5. Whether exports of ANS crude oil are likely to cause sustained material oil supply shortages or sustained oil price increases significantly above world market levels that would cause sustained material adverse employment effects in the United States or that would cause substantial harm to consumers, including noncontiguous States and Pacific territories.