

Trade Commission, Washington, DC, and by publishing the notice in the **Federal Register** of August 11, 2003 (68 FR 47607). The conference was held in Washington, DC, on August 21, 2003, and all persons who requested the opportunity were permitted to appear in person or by counsel.

The Commission transmitted its determinations in these investigations to the Secretary of Commerce on September 15, 2003. The views of the Commission are contained in USITC Publication 3633 (September 2003), entitled *Electrolytic Manganese Dioxide from Australia, China, Greece, Ireland, Japan, and South Africa: Investigations Nos. 731-TA-1048-1053 (Preliminary)*.

By order of the Commission.

Issued: September 15, 2003.

Marilyn R. Abbott,

Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Extension of Information Collection; Comment Request

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden conducts as preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program helps to ensure that requested data could be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer is soliciting comments concerning the proposed *extension of Department of Labor regulations implementing various provisions of the Debt Collection Act of 1982* (Pub. L. 97-365), including *Disclosure of Information to Credit Reporting Agencies; Administrative Offset; Interest, Penalties and Administrative Costs*.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the addressee section below on or before November 21, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to Thomas Stein, Department of Labor, Room S-4214 Frances Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Ave. NW., Washington, D.C. 20210; 202-693-6832 (phone); 202-693-6964 (fax); *stein.thomas@dol.gov* (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Debt Collection Act of 1982, the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-134), and the Federal Claims Collections Standards, as implemented in the Department of Labor by 29 CFR Part 20, require Federal agencies to afford debtors the opportunity to exercise certain rights before the agency reports a debt to a credit bureau or makes an administrative offset. In the exercise of these rights, the debtor may be asked to provide a written explanation of the basis for disputing the amount of existence of a debt alleged owned the agency. A debtor may also be required to provide asset, income, liability, or other information necessary for the agency to determine the debtor's ability to repay the debt, including any interest, penalties and administrative costs assessed.

Information provided by the debtor will be evaluated by the agency official responsible for collection of the debt in order to reconsider his/her initial decision with regard to the existence or amount of the debt. Information concerning the debtor's assets, income, liabilities, etc., will be used by the agency official responsible for collection of the debt to determine whether the agency's action with regard to administrative offset or the assessment of interest, administrative costs or penalties would create undue financial hardship for the debtor, or to determine whether the agency should accept the debtor's proposed repayment schedule.

If a debtor disputes or asks for reconsideration of the agency's determination concerning the debt, the debtor will be required to provide the information or documentation necessary to state his/her case. Presumably, the agency's initial determination would not change without the submission of new information.

Information such as the debtor's assets, income, and liabilities would typically not be available to the agency unless submitted by the debtor.

II. Desired Focus of Comments

The Department of Labor is particularly interested in comments which:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

Failure of the agency to request the information described would either violate the debtor's rights under the Debt Collection Act of 1982 or limit the agency's ability to collect outstanding debts.

If a debtor wishes to appeal an agency action based on undue financial hardship, he/she may be asked to submit information on his/her assets, income, liabilities, or other information considered necessary by the agency official for evaluating the appeal. Use of the information will be explained to the debtor when it is requested; consent to use the information for the specified purpose will be implied from the debtor's submission of the information.

IV. *Type of Review:* Extension without change.

V. *Agency:* Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

VI. *Title:* Disclosure of Information to Credit Reporting Agencies; Administrative Offset; Interest penalties and Administrative Costs.

VII. *OMB Number:* 1225-0030.

VIII. *Affected Public:* Individuals or households; businesses or other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions; small businesses or organizations; farms; Federal employees.

IX. *Cite/Reference/Form/etc:* It is estimated that 10% of the individuals and organizations indebted to the Department will contest the proposed collection action and will request an administrative review and/or appeal an action based on undue financial hardship. In some cases the debtor will make one request, but not the other. However, in most cases, it is expected that the debtor will request both actions—first, administrative review of