Net Profit Share Payments for Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leases, 30 CFR 220 (OMB Approval Number 1010–0073).

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before January 5, 1996.

SEND COMMENTS TO: David S. Guzy, Chief, Rules and Procedures Staff, Minerals Management Service, Mail Stop 3101, Building 85, Denver Federal Center, P.O. Box 25165, Denver, Colorado 80225; fax number is (303) 231–3194.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dennis C. Jones, Minerals Management Service, Mail Stop 3101, Building 85, Denver Federal Center, P.O. Box 25165, Denver, Colorado 80225; telephone number is (303) 231–3046.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In compliance with the requirement of Section 3506 (c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 each agency shall provide notice and otherwise consult with members of the public and affected agencies concerning collection of information in order to solicit comment to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

To encourage exploration and development of oil and gas leases on submerged lands of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), regulations were promulgated at 30 CFR 260.110(4) implementing a net profit share bidding system. The net profit share lease (NPSL) bidding system was established to properly balance a fair market return to the Federal Government for the lease of its lands, with a fair profit to companies risking their investment capital. The system provides an incentive for early and expeditious exploration and development, and provides for a sharing of the risks by the lessee and the Government. The bidding system incorporates a fixed capital recovery system as the means through which the lessee recovers costs of exploration and development from production revenues, along with a reasonable return on investment.

Lessees are required (30 CFR 220.010) to maintain an NPSL capital account and to provide annual or monthly reports using data taken from the capital account (30 CFR 220.031). This collection of information is necessary in order to determine when royalty payments are due and to determine the proper amount of payment. No unique information is required by MMS. Only a minimal recordkeeping burden is imposed annually by this collection of information. MMS uses the data submitted in the annual and monthly reports to verify costs claimed, revenues earned, and profit share (royalty) payments due. No royalties are paid until lessees recover their exploration and development expenses.

When companies enter into NPSL agreements, they agree to submit the reports required by 30 CFR 220.031. Information required to complete these reports comes from records maintained by the companies for their own use. There are no reporting forms required, but the lessees must submit updates containing specific information. Before production begins, reports are required on an annual basis. These reports must document costs incurred, credits received, and the balance in the NPSL capital account. Once production begins, monthly reports are required that include the amount and disposition of oil and gas saved, removed, or sold; the amount of production revenue; the amount and description of costs and credits to the NPSL capital account; the balance in the capital account; the net profit share base and net profit share payment due the Government; and the lessee's monthly profit share.

MMS estimates that approximately 16 hours are required per report to extract the data required by 30 CFR 220.031 from company records. One additional hour for recordkeeping is required as companies set up files for each lease. A $25 hourly rate estimate is used in the calculation of the annual cost to industry.

Dated: October 31, 1995.

Donald T. Sant,

Deputy Associate Director for Valuation and Operations.

[FR Doc. 95–27417 Filed 11–3–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–MR–P

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

[Ex Parte No. 388 (Sub-No. 29)]

Intrastate Rail Rate Authority—South Carolina

AGENCY: Interstate Commerce Commission.

ACTION: Notice of recertification.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 11501(b), the Commission recertifies the State of South Carolina to regulate intrastate rail rates, classifications, rules, and practices for a 5-year period.

DATES: Recertification will become effective on December 6, 1995 and will expire on December 5, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elaine Sehrt-Green, (202) 927–5269 or Beryl Gordon, (202) 927–5610. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927–5721.]

Decided: October 30, 1995.

By the Commission, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Owen, and Commissioner Simmons.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 95–27432 Filed 11–3–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7035–01–P

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[Notice 95–099]

National Environmental Policy Act; Shuttle Laser Altimeter

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), and NASA policy and procedures (14 CFR Part 1216 Subpart 3), NASA has made a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with respect to the proposed Shuttle Laser Altimeter (SLA) to be constructed at the Goddard Space Flight Center, in Greenbelt, Maryland. SLA involves the precise global measurement of the topography of the distance from the Earth's surface with respect to the Space Shuttle.

DATES: Comments in response to this notice must be provided in writing to NASA on or before December 6, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Dr. Jack L. Bufton, Associate Chief for Sensor Physics, Laboratory for Terrestrial Physics, Code 920, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771. The Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the proposed SLA which supports this FONSI may be reviewed at:

(a) Prince George's County Memorial Library System—Bowie Branch, 15210 Annapolis Rd., Bowie, Maryland.
(b) NASA Headquarters Information Center, Room 1H23, 300 E. Street S.W., Washington, DC.
(c) NASA, Ames Research Center, Moffet Field, CA 94035 (415–604–4191).
(d) NASA, Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards, CA 93523 (805–258–3047).
(e) NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771 (301–286–7216).
(f) Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Visitors Lobby, Building 49, 4800 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena, CA 91109 (818–354–5011).
(g) NASA, Johnson Space Center, Houston, TX 77058 (713–483–8612).
(h) NASA, Langley Research Center, Hampton, VA 23665 (804–864–6125).
(i) NASA, Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899 (407–867–2622).
(j) NASA, Lewis Research Center, 21000 Brookpark Road, Cleveland, OH 44135 (215–433–2902).
(k) NASA, Marshall Space Flight Center, AL 35812 (205–544–5252).
(l) NASA, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529 (601–688–2164).

A limited number of copies of the EA are available by contacting Jack L. Bufton, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771, telephone 301–286–8591.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Jack L. Bufton, 301–286–8591.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NASA has reviewed the EA prepared for the proposed SLA and has determined that it represents an accurate and adequate analysis of the scope and level of its associated environmental impacts. The EA, including the ''Shuttle Laser Altimeter Ground Observer Eye Safety Analysis'', is incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

NASA is proposing to test a low power laser altimeter instrument in space as a pathfinder instrument for global measurement of the topography of the Earth's land surface. Laser altimeter instruments have been in use for several decades from airborne instrument platforms for the purpose of terrain mapping and previous laser altimeters have flown in space. Research results from these earlier programs indicate the advantages of a spacebased global observations of Earth land surface topography using the high spatial resolution and vertical precision offered by the laser altimeter technique. Accurate topographic information on the Earth's landforms is essential in a wide variety of Earth science disciplines, agriculture, land-use studies, and natural disaster (e.g., floods, erosion, landslides, volcanoes, earth quakes, etc.) mitigation.

The principal components of a laser altimeter system are the laser transmitter, optical receiver, and data system. The laser transmitter sends a low powered pulsed laser bean of 1064 nano meter wavelength radiation throughout the Earth's atmosphere toward the Earth's surface. Each laser pulse has a temporal duration of 10 nano seconds and forms a spot of approximately 100 meters (m) in diameter on the Earth's surface. Reflection of laser radiation from this spot is detected at the laser altimeter instrument by the combination of an optical telescope and detector that constitute the optical receiver package and covert the optical pulse into an electronic pulse. The laser pulse time-of-flight for the round-trip from the laser altimeter instrument to the Earth's surface and return is measured. This data then is used to compute distance between the instrument and the Earth's surface. The data system performs the computation of distance from pulse time-of-flight and communicates the altimeter data to external systems and on-board data recorders.

For laser altimeter operations, the instrument must be pointed perpendicular to the Earth's surface in order to make accurate distance measurements. The optical receiver is quite sensitive, since most of the pulse laser radiation is scattered in the reflection of light from the spot on the Earth's surface or scattered and absorbed in the Earth's atmosphere. By using pulsed laser energy to make a series of distance measurements (profiles) along the ground track of a spacecraft, laser altimeter instrument can build up a global grid of accurate surface topography.

The proposed SLA experiment will entail flying a laser altimeter instrument as a small attached payload on the Space Shuttle. The first flight is scheduled for November 1995 and will be a 9-day mission to gain experience in operating a laser altimeter in space environment, and to evaluate the sensitivity of the laser altimeter instrument for performing the surface elevation measurement mission. The current flight plan calls for seven operational periods of approximately 10 to 15 hours duration each during which the SLA will continuously profile the Earth and ocean surface topography along the ground track (nadir track) of the Shuttle. The SLA instrument operates continuously at 10 pulses per second (pps) during each period. This results in a continuous profile of 120 m diameter optical spots (i.e., altimeter sensor footprints) that are separated by approximately 740 m along the ground-track of the Space Shuttle. At least one SLA operational period is scheduled on each Shuttle flight day after flight day 2. The planned orbit for these SLA operations is a 300 kilometer (160 nautical miles) circular orbit at 28.5° inclination. Thus the SLA measurements will be conducted between 28.5° North latitude and 28.5° South latitude. Among the land masses crossed will be Africa, most of Latin America, Southland Southeast Asia, and much of Australia. Consequently, no SLA operations will be conducted over the continental US north of Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The proposed action and the no-action alternative were considered in this Environmental Assessment (EA). The no-action alternative will not fulfill the objective of advancing the Nation's topographic measurement capability. Under the No-Action alternative, it will not be possible to fully develop or space test the laser altimeter instrument technology for an operational space-based topography system. It will then be necessary to rely on existing photogrammetric and radar mapping instruments which have limitations in accuracy and in interpretation of topography data.

A review by the North American Defense Command and United States Space Command SPADOC Laser Clearinghouse found that the SLA laser transmitter does not produce sufficient laser energy to exceed their damage threshold and, therefore, does not require clearinghouse screening.

The only potential source of environmental impact from the proposed action is the portion of the laser pulse energy which will pass through the Earth's atmosphere and reach the surface. The SLA laser energy is negligible compared to natural sources of optical radiation. A ground observer safety analysis was performed for the SLA experiment and found no substantial risk of human eye or skin injury from operation of the SLA instrument within the range of possible Shuttle orbital altitudes.

No other environmental impacts have been identified as a result of the EA. On the basis of the SLA EA and underlying reference documents, NASA has determined that the environmental impacts associated with this project will not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the environment. NASA will take no final action prior to the expiration of the 30-day comment period.

Dated: November 1, 1995.

William F. Townsend,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Mission to Planet Earth.

[FR Doc. 95–27449 Filed 11–3–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–M

[Notice 95–098]

Notice of Prospective Patent License

SUMMARY: NASA hereby gives notice that Estee Lauder Companies of Melville, New York 11747, has requested a partially exclusive license to practice the invention protected by U.S. Patent No. 4,902,769, entitled ''Low Dielectric Fluorinated Poly (Phenylene Ether Ketone) film and coating,'' which was issued on February 20, 1990, to the United States of America as represented by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Written objections to the prospective grant of a license should be sent to Mr. George F. Helfrich, Patent Counsel, Langley Research Center.

DATES: Responses to this Notice must be received by January 5, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. George F. Helfrich, Patent Counsel, NSAS Langley Research Center, Mail Code 212, Hampton, VA 23681–0001; telephone (804) 864–3521.

Dated: October 27, 1995.

Edward A. Frankle,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 95–27448 Filed 11–3–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Communications Between the NRC and Licensees; Policy Statement

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Policy statement.

SUMMARY: This policy statement presents the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) policy that informs both the nuclear industry and the NRC staff of the Commission's expectations regarding communications, including the reporting of perceived inappropriate regulatory actions by the NRC staff. The Commission encourages and expects open communications at all levels between its employees and those it regulates. Licensees should feel unconstrained in communicating with the NRC. Additionally, the NRC will not tolerate inappropriate regulatory actions by the NRC staff, nor will it tolerate retaliation or the threat of retaliation against those licensees who communicate concerns to the agency.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 6, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia A. Carpenter, Office of the Executive Director for Operations, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC. 20555, telephone: (301) 415-1733.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

COMSECY–95–008, dated February 21, 1995, forwarded to the Commission a draft NRC policy that would inform both the nuclear industry and the NRC staff of the Commission's expectations regarding communications, including the reporting of perceived inappropriate regulatory actions by the NRC staff. COMSECY–95–008 also forwarded a proposed procedure for handling such concerns within the Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) if reported by a senior power reactor manager (licensee official).

In a Staff Requirements Memorandum dated March 21, 1995, the Commission directed the NRC staff to discuss the concepts in COMSECY–95–008 with the Agency Labor-Management Partnership (ALMP) and to meet with the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) to discuss communication issues. In addition, the Commission provided items for further NRC staff consideration in its evaluation of the proposed policy and guidance documents.

The NRC staff discussed the proposed NRC policy and the draft procedure for handling perceived inappropriate regulatory actions during the Regional Labor-Management Partnership Subcommittee (Partnership) meeting on March 29, 1995, and at the ALMP meeting on April 21, 1995. There was consensus within the Partnership that the procedure was necessary. The Partnership also provided several suggested wording changes to clarify the procedure.

On May 11, 1995, the NRC staff met with NEI representatives regarding the NRC staff's actions in response to the Towers Perrin Nuclear Regulatory Review Study and to discuss communications between the NRC and the nuclear industry. NEI believed that the NRC's initiatives would enhance the effectiveness of communications between NRC and the nuclear industry and encourage the NRC staff to communicate this policy and procedure to the industry.

SECY–95–149, dated June 8, 1995, forwarded to the Commission the revised NRC policy that would inform both the nuclear industry and the NRC staff of the Commission's expectations regarding communications, including the reporting of perceived inappropriate regulatory actions by the NRC staff. As recommended by the Commission, the procedure was expanded to address the broad range of communications between the NRC and licensees. The NRC staff clarified the definition of inappropriate regulatory actions, including changes recommended by the Partnership. The procedural steps were also reordered as recommended by the Commission.

In a Staff Requirements Memorandum dated June 28, 1995, the Commission did not object to issuance of the policy regarding communications between the NRC and industry.

Statement of Policy

In 1991, the Commission established the ''NRC Principles of Good Regulation,'' a copy of which is presented as Appendix A to this document. The Commission believes that good regulation must be transacted publicly and candidly and that open communications must be maintained with Congress, other Government agencies, licensees, and the public.

The Commission encourages and expects open communications at all levels between its employees and those it regulates. Licensees should feel unconstrained in communicating with the NRC. The Commission also expects the NRC staff to exercise initiative in maintaining open lines of communication and to ensure that its regulatory activities are appropriate and consistent. The Commission recognizes that honest, well-intentioned differences in opinions between the NRC staff and the licensee will occasionally occur. Therefore, the Commission encourages open communications to foster an environment where such differences receive constructive and prompt resolution.

Open communication also extends to the reporting of perceived inappropriate regulatory actions by the NRC staff when dealing with licensees. The Commission encourages licensees to provide specific information regarding such concerns.

The NRC will not tolerate inappropriate regulatory actions [1] by the

[1] Inappropriate regulatory actions include activities that exceed the agency's regulatory authority, involve improper application of agency requirements, or adversely affect the agency's regulatory functions. Examples of inappropriate regulatory actions include, but are not limited to, unjustified inconsistent application of regulations and guidance by NRC staff or management that significantly affect licensee activities and inappropriate action on the part of NRC staff and management that disrupts effective communications with the licensee.