

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4747]

Discontinuation of Reissuance of Certain Nonimmigrant Visas in the United States

This public notice announces the discontinuation of our domestic visa reissuance service for certain nonimmigrant visas in the United States. Nonimmigrant visas issued under section 101(a)(15) C, E, H, I, L, O and P of the Immigration and Nationality Act will be affected by this suspension. We will accept no new applications from applicants seeking to renew C, E, H, I, L, O or P visas after July 16, 2004. To be processed, applications must be received by our application acceptance facility in St. Louis by July 16, 2004. Any application received after this date will be returned, using the sender's required self-addressed, stamped envelope or pre-paid courier airbill. Please note that we ceased processing applications for reissuance of A-3, G-5 and NATO-7 visas in the United States in September 2002. We will continue to receive applications for reissuance of qualifying diplomatic and official visas in Washington, DC in (classifications A-1, A-2, G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1, NATO-2, NATO-3, NATO-4, NATO-5 and NATO-6).

22 CFR 41.111(b) authorizes the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services or any other person he or she designates to reissue nonimmigrant visas, in their discretion. The original purpose of this authority was to provide nonimmigrant services to foreign government officials and to international organization employees. Over time, the authority was extended to include reissuances in the C, E, H, I, L, O and P visa classifications. We recognize that the domestic reissuance of business-related visas to applicants in the United States has been a convenience to the international business community. However, we are discontinuing the reissuance of visas in these categories because of increased interview requirements and the requirement of Section 303 of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (Pub. L. 107-173, 116 Stat. 543) that U.S. visas issued after October 26, 2004, include biometric identifiers. It is not feasible for the Department to collect the biometric identifiers in the United States.

In order to mitigate the inconvenience to applicants, we will direct all visa adjudicating posts to accommodate on a priority basis applicants who would have benefited from our visa reissuance

services. Visa interview appointments may be made for some posts through Internet sites or by telephone. Additional information regarding posts and visa interview appointment systems may be found at <http://usembassy.state.gov>. We encourage all applicants to apply in their home countries. Our visa adjudicating posts in Mexico and Canada have some capacity to accept nonimmigrant visa applications from stateside applicants. In all cases, applicants should obtain an interview appointment before traveling.

Dated: June 10, 2004.

Maura Harty,

*Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs,
Department of State.*

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**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE**

[Docket No. WTO/DS-308]

**WTO Dispute Settlement Proceeding
Regarding Mexico—Tax Measures on
Soft Drinks and Other Beverages**

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is providing notice that on June 10, 2004, in accordance with the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO Agreement), the United States requested the establishment of a dispute settlement panel regarding Mexico's tax measures on soft drinks and other beverages as well as on syrups, concentrates, powders, essences or extracts that can be diluted to produce such products (hereinafter "beverages and syrups") that use any sweetener other than cane sugar.

USTR invites written comments from the public concerning the issues raised in this dispute.

DATES: Although USTR will accept any comments received during the course of the dispute settlement proceedings, comments should be submitted on or before July 30, 2004 to be assured of timely consideration by USTR.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted (i) electronically, to FR0420@ustr.gov, with "Mexico Soft Drinks (DS308)" in the subject line, or (ii) by fax, to Sandy McKinzy at (202) 395-3640, with a confirmation copy sent electronically to the electronic mail address above, in accordance with the

requirements for submission set out below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Karpel, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC, (202) 395-5804.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 127(b) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA) (19 U.S.C. 3537(b)(1)) requires that notice and opportunity for comment be provided after the United States submits or receives a request for the establishment of a WTO dispute settlement panel. Consistent with this obligation, USTR is providing notice that the United States requested establishment of a panel pursuant to the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU). If a dispute settlement panel is established pursuant to the DSU, such panel, which would hold its meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, would be expected to issue a report on its findings and recommendations within six to nine months after it is established.

Major Issues Raised by the United States

On June 10, 2004, the United States requested the establishment of a panel regarding Mexico's tax measures on beverages and syrups that use any sweetener other than cane sugar. Those measures include:

(1) Law on the Special Tax on Production and Services (*Ley del Impuesto Especial sobre Producción y Servicios* or "IEPS") published on January 1, 2002 and its subsequent amendments published on December 30, 2002 and December 31, 2003; and

(2) any related or implementing measures, including the *Reglamento de la Ley del Impuesto Especial sobre Producción y Servicios* published on May 15, 1990, the *Resolución Miscelánea Fiscal Para 2004* (Title 6) published on April 30, 2004, and the *Resolución Miscelánea Fiscal Para 2003* (Title 6) published on March 31, 2003 which identify, inter alia, details on the scope, calculation, payment and bookkeeping and recording requirements of the IEPS.

Mexico's tax measures impose a 20 percent tax on beverages and syrups that use sweeteners other than cane sugar. Mexico's tax measures also impose a 20 percent tax on services related to the transfer of beverages and syrups, including the commissioning, mediation, agency, representation, brokerage, consignment and distribution of such products. Beverages and syrups sweetened only with cane sugar, and services related to their transfer, are not