

§ 553.23

notice requesting comments, comments may not exceed 15 pages in length, but necessary attachments may be appended to the submission without regard to the 15-page limit. Any interested person shall submit as a part of his written comments all material that he considers relevant to any statement of fact made by him. Incorporation by reference should be avoided. However, if incorporation by reference is necessary, the incorporated material shall be identified with respect to document and page. It is requested, but not required, that 10 copies and attachments, if any, be submitted.

§ 553.23 Consideration of comments received.

All timely comments are considered before final action is taken on a rule-making proposal. Late filed comments may be considered as far as practicable.

§ 553.25 Additional rulemaking proceedings.

The Administrator may initiate any further rulemaking proceedings that he finds necessary or desirable. For example, interested persons may be invited to make oral arguments, to participate in conferences between the Administrator or his representative and interested persons at which minutes of the conference are kept, to appear at informal hearings presided over by officials designated by the Administrator, at which a transcript or minutes are kept, or participate in any other proceeding to assure informed administrative action and to protect the public interest.

§ 553.27 Hearings.

(a) Sections 556 and 557 of title 5, United States Code, do not apply to hearings held under this part. Unless otherwise specified, hearings held under this part are informal, non-adversary, fact-finding proceedings, at which there are no formal pleadings or adverse parties. Any rule issued in a case in which an informal hearing is held is not necessarily based exclusively on the record of the hearing.

(b) The Administrator designates a representative to conduct any hearing held under this part. The Chief Counsel

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designates a member of his staff to serve as legal officer at the hearing.

§ 553.29 Adoption of final rules.

Final rules are prepared by representatives of the office concerned and the Office of the Chief Counsel. The rule is then submitted to the Administrator for its consideration. If the Administrator adopts the rule, it is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, unless all persons subject to it are named and are personally served with a copy of it.

§§ 553.31-553.33 [Reserved]

§ 553.35 Petitions for reconsideration.

(a) Any interested person may petition the Administrator for reconsideration of any rule issued under this part. The petition shall be submitted to: Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC, 20590. It is requested, but not required, that 10 copies be submitted. The petition must be received not later than 45 days after publication of the rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Petitions filed after that time will be considered as petitions filed under Part 552 of this chapter. The petition must contain a brief statement of the complaint and an explanation as to why compliance with the rule is not practicable, is unreasonable, or is not in the public interest. Unless otherwise specified in the final rule, the statement and explanation together may not exceed 15 pages in length, but necessary attachments may be appended to the submission without regard to the 15-page limit.

(b) If the petitioner requests the consideration of additional facts, he must state the reason they were not presented to the Administrator within the prescribed time.

(c) The Administrator does not consider repetitious petitions.

(d) Unless the Administrator otherwise provides, the filing of a petition under this section does not stay the effectiveness of the rule.

§ 553.37 Proceedings on petitions for reconsideration.

The Administrator may grant or deny, in whole or in part, any petition

for reconsideration without further proceedings. In the event he determines to reconsider any rule, he may issue a final decision on reconsideration without further proceedings, or he may provide such opportunity to submit comment or information and data as he deems appropriate. Whenever the Administrator determines that a petition should be granted or denied, he prepares a notice of the grant or denial of a petition for reconsideration, for issuance to the petitioner, and issues it to the petitioner. The Administrator may consolidate petitions relating to the same rule.

§ 553.39 Effect of petition for reconsideration on time for seeking judicial review.

The filing of a timely petition for reconsideration of any rule issued under this part postpones the expiration of the statutory period in which to seek judicial review of that rule only as to the petitioner, and not as to other interested persons. For the petitioner, the period for seeking judicial review will commence at the time the agency takes final action upon the petition for reconsideration.

[60 FR 63651, Dec. 12, 1995]

APPENDIX A TO PART 553—STATEMENT OF POLICY: ACTION ON PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION

It is the policy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue notice of the action taken on a petition for reconsideration within 90 days after the closing date for receipt of such petitions, unless it is found impracticable to take action within that time. In cases where it is so found and the delay beyond that period is ex-

pected to be substantial, notice of that fact, and the date by which it is expected that action will be taken, will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

APPENDIX B TO PART 553—STATEMENT OF POLICY: RULEMAKINGS INVOLVING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE OF SAFETY STANDARDS

(a) Based on a comparison of the performance of vehicles or equipment, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) may tentatively determine that a foreign motor vehicle safety standard is better than or at least functionally equivalent to a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS), either on its own motion or in connection with a petition for rulemaking by any interested party under 49 CFR Part 552. Such determinations will be made in accordance with the process described in the flowchart in Figure 1 of this Appendix.

(b) Under the process, if NHTSA decides that there is reason to believe that a foreign standard is better than or at least functionally equivalent to a FMVSS in accordance with the process, it will commence a rulemaking proceeding that may lead to the issuance of a proposal to add the foreign standard as an alternative compliance option to the FMVSS, to harmonize the FMVSS with the foreign standard or to upgrade the FMVSS to the level of the foreign standard, as appropriate. Such a proposal will request comment on the agency's tentative determination regarding relative benefits and functional equivalence as well as the proposed amendment. Final determinations regarding these matters will also be made in accordance with the analytical criteria in the flowchart.

(c) As used in this appendix, the term "standard" refers to mandatory requirements and thus has the same meaning given the term "technical regulation" in Annex 1 to the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.