Federal Register for general comment, to allow people and organizations that did not participate on the work group to offer comments on the proposals. Following review of the public comments, the Coast Guard will establish final measures and publish them for general use by training providers in developing and providing courses and programs. The National Maritime Center will consider alternative measures, but will use those adopted by the Coast Guard as accepted minimum performance measures.

Request for Comments on Basic Safety Training

The performance measures for basic safety training were developed by a work group comprised of members of the training and industry community, and were recommended to the Coast Guard for consideration by MERPAC. The Coast Guard now seeks public comment, written data, views or arguments regarding these measures before they are published for general use by the maritime community. Persons submitting comments should include their names and address, identify this notice [USCG–1999–5080] and the specific section of the document to which each comment or question applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and attachments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing to the Document Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES.** Persons wanting acknowledgement of receipt of comments should enclose stamped self-addressed postcards or envelopes. The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period.

Dated: February 8, 1999.

Joseph J. Angelo,

Acting Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

[FR Doc. 99–3421 Filed 2–11–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. FHWA–98–4743]

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century; Project Selection/Fund Allocation for the Indian Reservation Bridge Program

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: Section 1115 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century establishes a nationwide priority program for improving deficient Indian reservation road (IRR) bridges and reserves $13 million of IRR funds per year to replace and rehabilitate bridges that are in poor condition. The FHWA, Federal Lands Highway Office (FLHO), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Transportation (BIADOT), intend to implement the IRR bridge program (IRRBP) to promptly address the deficient IRR bridges. Toward that end, the FLHO and the BIADOT, in consultation with Indian tribal governments, will develop project selection/fund allocation procedures for uniform application of the legislation. The FHWA is announcing its intention to solicit comments on project selection/fund allocation procedures for the IRRBP in written format and through informal consultation with Indian tribal governments and other interested parties. After a series of informal consultation sessions and following review of written comments filed in response to this notice, the FHWA will develop project selection/fund allocation procedures.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before March 15, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Your signed, written comments must refer to the docket number appearing at the top of this document and you must submit your comments to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590–0001. All comments will be available for examination at the above address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Wade F. Casey, Federal Lands Highway Office, HFL–20, (202) 366–9486; or Ms. Grace Reidy, Office of Chief Counsel, HCC–32, (202) 366–6226; Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, D.C. 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

Internet users can access all comments received by the U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, by using the universal resource locator (URL): *http://dms.dot.gov*. It is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Please follow the instructions online for more information and help.

An electronic copy of this document may be downloaded by using a modem and suitable communications software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512–1661. Internet users may reach the **Federal Register**'s home page at: *http://www.nara.gov/fedreg* and the Government Printing Office's database at: *http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara*.

Background

In order to implement the IRRBP established in section 1115 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21), Pub. L. 105–178, 112 Stat 107, to be codified at 23 U.S.C. 202(d)(4)(A), and in order to promptly address the deficient IRR bridges, project selection/fund allocation procedures will be developed. The FHWA is soliciting comments in writing and at a series of informal consultation sessions with Indian tribal governments and other interested parties to develop procedures for this program. Both written and oral comments will be considered and included in the docket. Following consultation and the review of written comments, the FHWA intends to develop through appropriate administrative processes project selection/fund allocation procedures by which to operate the IRRBP.

Statutory Provisions: Section 1115 of TEA–21, amended title 23, U.S.C., to require the Secretary to establish a nationwide priority program for improving deficient IRR bridges. Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for IRRs for each fiscal year 1998 through 2003, section 1115 requires the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior, to reserve not less than $13 million for projects to replace, rehabilitate, seismically retrofit, paint, apply calcium magnesium acetate to, apply sodium acetate/formate or other environmentally acceptable, minimally corrosive anti-icing and de-icing compositions, or install scour countermeasures for deficient IRR bridges, including multiple-pipe culverts.

The statute provides that, to be eligible to receive funding under the Nationwide Priority Bridge Program, a bridge must: (i) have an opening of 20 feet or more; (ii) be on an IRR; (iii) be unsafe because of structural deficiencies, physical deterioration, or functional obsolescence; and (iv) be recorded in the national bridge inventory (NBI) administered by the Secretary under 23 U.S.C. 144 (b). The statute further provides that the funds to carry out IRR bridge projects shall be made available only on approval of

plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) by the Secretary.

The following information highlights the statutory provisions that define the IRRBP and presents various FHWA preliminary recommendations and alternative procedures for program administration and funds distribution for the consideration of parties wishing to participate in the consultation sessions or desiring to file written comments. We emphasize that the project eligibility criteria and alternative funding procedures set forth in this notice for IRRBP administration are presented only as suggestions to assist interested parties in formulating their own comments and recommendations. We encourage parties to submit and we commit to actively consider additional alternatives for the IRRBP administration, as well as variations on the alternative funding procedures identified in this notice.

Issues Concerning Funding Availability and Project Eligibility

1. What is the total funding available for the IRR bridge program?

The statute provides a total program funding of not less than $13 million for each FY 1998–2003.

2. When will these funds become available?

These funds become available on October 1 of each fiscal year for each fiscal year 1998–2003.

3. When does an eligible project receive funding?

The statue provides that these funds are provided after the Secretary of Transportation approves a completed PS&E.

4. How long will these funds be available?

The statue provides that the funds for each fiscal year are available for the year authorized plus three years (a total of four years).

5. What can these IRR bridge funds be used for?

The statute provides that these funds can be used to replace, rehabilitate, seismically retrofit, paint, apply calcium magnesium acetate to, apply sodium acetate/formate or other environmentally acceptable, minimally corrosive anti-icing and deicing compositions, or install scour countermeasures for deficient IRR bridges.

6. Which bridges are eligible?

The statute provides that to be eligible to receive funding, a bridge must: (i) have an opening of 20 feet or more; (ii) be on an IRR; (iii) be unsafe because of structural deficiencies, physical deterioration or functional obsolescence; and (iv) be recorded in the NBI maintained by the FHWA. In view of the limited availability of funds, and under 23 U.S.C. 204(a)'s recognition of the need for all Federal roads to be treated under uniform policies that apply to Federal-aid highways, the FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including in IRRBP procedures a provision that, if a bridge has been rehabilitated or replaced in the last 10 years, its eligibility would be limited to seismic retrofit or installation of scour countermeasures.

7. When is a bridge eligible for replacement?

Given under 23 U.S.C. 204(a)'s recognition of the need for all Federal roads to be treated under uniform policies that apply to Federal-aid highways, the FHWA recommends preliminarily that IRRBP procedures should provide that, to be eligible for replacement, the bridge must be considered deficient for reasons of structural deficiency or functional obsolescence. We further recommend that any procedures developed for program administration should provide that the bridge also must have an NBI sufficiency rating of less than 50 to be eligible for replacement. We invite commenters specifically to address these issues.

8. When is a bridge eligible for rehabilitation?

For reasons corresponding to those addressed in item 7 concerning replacement eligibility, the FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including in the IRRBP procedures a provision that, to be eligible for rehabilitation, a bridge must be considered deficient for reasons of structural deficiency or functional obsolescence. We further recommend that program administration procedures should provide that a bridge also must have an NBI sufficiency rating of less than or equal to 80 to be eligible for rehabilitation. Finally, we invite comments on the advisability of stipulating in any IRRBP procedures that a bridge would be eligible for replacement if the total life cycle cost for bridge rehabilitation exceeds the costs to replace.

9. How does ownership impact project selection?

Since the Federal government has both a trust responsibility and owns the BIA bridges on Indian reservations, the FHWA recommends preliminarily and invites comment on the view that, under any IRRBP procedures developed, primary consideration would be given to funding construction projects for deficient BIA owned IRR bridges. We emphasize that consideration could also be given to the funding of construction projects for the deficient non-BIA, IRR bridges. States and counties have at their disposal other revenue sources to use to rehabilitate and replace non-BIA IRR bridges. Specifically States and counties have access to the highway bridge replacement and rehabilitation program (HBRRP) funds previously provided under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Pub. L. 102–240, 105 Stat. 1914, and continued under the TEA–21 for rehabilitation and replacement of their deficient non-BIA owned IRR bridges.

10. Do IRRBP projects have to be on a transportation improvement program (TIP)?

Yes. All IRRBP projects have to be listed on an approved TIP. Under 23 U.S.C. 204 (j), IRR bridges must appear on the BIA's IRRBP TIP and be forwarded to the State.

11. What percent of the contract authority in any fiscal year is available for use on BIA owned bridges and non-BIA owned IRR bridges?

Based on the ownership issues previously discussed in item 9 emphasizing the need to reduce the number of deficient BIA owned IRR bridges, the FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including in the IRRBP procedures a provision that up to 80 percent ($10.4 million) of contract authority in any fiscal year would be available for use on BIA owned IRR bridges. This would leave 20 percent ($2.6 million) of contract authority in any fiscal year that would be available for use on non-BIA owned IRR bridges. Under this approach, by April 30 of each year, any excess funds beyond those required for non-BIA owned bridges would be made available for deficient BIA owned bridges.

12. What percent of a specific project's construction costs is covered under this program?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any procedures adopted for administering the IRRBP the following funding provisions: (i) Up to 100 percent contract authority would be provided for a BIA owned IRR bridge; (ii) Up to 80 percent of the contract authority would be provided for a State, county,

or locally owned non-BIA IRR bridge; (iii) States, counties, local and tribal governments would be required to provide at least 20 percent of the funds for non-BIA IRR bridges; (iv) The contract authority ceiling for any single non-BIA IRR bridge project would be $1.5 million.

13. When are IRR bridge projects eligible for funding?

Section 1115 provides that IRR funds to carry out IRRBP projects shall be made available only on approval of PS&E by the Secretary. Approval consists of having completed and approved bridge design, specifications and estimates. The FHWA invites comment on including within any IRRBP procedures the following provisions concerning timing of project eligibility. The project must be ready for construction, right of way must have been acquired, and the project must be awarded within 120 calendar days of funding. A copy of the FHWA Division Office PS&E approval letter, control schedule and certification checklist must be forwarded by the area office to the BIADOT/FLHO for review and acceptance. Submittal of an incomplete application package would form the basis for project disapproval and the BIA area office would have to revise and resubmit the package.

14. What does a complete application package consist of?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any IRRBP procedures the following provisions concerning contents of the application package. A complete application package would consist of the following: the FHWA Division Office PS&E approval letter, control schedule and certification checklist.

15. How are the FY 1998 projects to be treated?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any IRRBP procedures the following provision concerning funding of FY 1998 projects. In order not to penalize any BIA area office which completed PS&E packages in FY 1998 that were not funded because the project selection/ fund allocation procedures for distribution of funds for FY 1998 were not in place, the funds for approved projects would be made available to the BIA area offices on receipt and acceptance of their application packages.

16. How is a list of deficient bridges to be generated?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any IRRBP procedures the following methodology for generating a list of deficient IRR bridges. A list of deficient BIA IRR bridges would be developed each fiscal year by the FHWA based on the annual April update of the NBI. The NBI is based on data from the inspection of IRR bridges. Likewise, a list of non-BIA IRR bridges would be obtained from the NBI. These lists would form the basis for identifying bridges that would be considered potentially eligible for participation in the IRRBP. Two separate master bridge lists (one each for BIA and non-BIA IRR bridges) would be developed and would include, at a minimum, the following: (i) sufficiency rating; (ii) status (structurally deficient or functionally obsolete); (iii) average daily traffic (NBI item 29); (iv) detour length (NBI item 19); and (v) truck average daily traffic (NBI item 109). These lists would be provided by the FHWA to the BIADOT for publication and notification of affected BIA area offices, Indian tribal governments, and State and local governments.

The FHWA further recommends and invites comment on the view that, the Indian tribal governments in consultation with the BIA area offices prioritize the design for bridges that are structurally deficient over bridges that are simply functionally obsolete, since the former is more critical structurally than the latter. Bridges that have higher average daily traffic (ADT) should be considered before those that have lower ADT. Detour length should also be a factor in selection and submittal of bridges, with those having a higher detour length being of greater concern. Lastly, bridges with high truck ADT should take precedence over those which have lower ADT. Other items of note should be whether school buses use the bridge and the types of trucks that may cross the bridge and the loads imposed.

17. In the event of project cost over runs how would they be funded?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any IRRBP procedures the following methodology for funding cost over runs. Because of the critical nature of this program, BIA area road engineer (ARE) approved costs in excess of the project estimate could be funded out of this program depending on the availability of funds and subject to BIADOT/ FLHO project approval procedures.

18. Could regular IRR funds be used to fund a bridge project?

The FHWA invites comment on the advisability of including within any IRRBP procedures the following provision concerning use of regular IRR funds to fund bridge projects. Indian tribal governments could use regular IRR construction funds to fund a bridge project with the concurrence of the FHWA, BIADOT and the ARE. (Note, IRR funds may not be used to match state HBRRP funds.)

19. Could bridge maintenance be performed with these funds?

No. Bridge maintenance (BM) type repairs would not be within the scope of funding, e.g. guard rail replacement, deck timber repair, delineators replacement etc. There are BM funds available through annual Department of Interior (DOI) appropriations for use on BIA owned bridges. These DOI BM funds would be the appropriate funding source for BM.

20. Once eligibility of a bridge project has been determined, how will the project be funded/programmed?

The FHWA has preliminarily identified alternative procedures for project funding of BIA owned and non-BIA owned IRR bridges and has set forth these procedures for consideration in this notice. Commenters are encouraged to review and assess these procedural alternatives and to develop any additional strategies for distributing funds for the rehabilitation or replacement of deficient IRR bridges. To assist in this consideration process, the alternatives presented here also are summarized and set forth for comparison purposes in the tabular form in the appendix.

Funding Procedures for BIA Owned IRR Bbridges

Alternative Procedure No. 1

Funding and/or programming of construction projects would be based on the annual calculation of bridge deck areas for deficient BIA owned IRR bridges. This is the same procedure the FHWA uses to distribute HBRRP program funds to the States. From this calculation, a percentage of the obligation limitation would be reserved for each BIA area office.

Alternative Procedure No. 2

Funding and/or programming of construction projects would be based on the annual calculation of bridge deck areas for deficient BIA owned IRR bridges. This is the same procedure the FHWA uses to distribute HBRRP

program funds to the States. From this calculation, a percentage of the obligation limitation would be reserved for each BIA area office for use in that specific State where the deficient bridges are identified. This would be similar to the way the not less than 1 percent HBRRP operated under the ISTEA.

Alternative Procedure No. 3

Funding and/or programming of construction projects would be based on the annual calculation of the number of deficient bridges for the BIA owned IRR bridges. From this calculation, a percentage of the bridge obligation limitation would be reserved for each BIA area office. This distribution is based on the percentage of deficient bridges within that BIA area office.

Alternative Procedure No. 4

Funding and/or programming of construction projects for BIA owned IRR bridges would be based on the order of receipt of a complete application package, i.e., eligibility requirements met, PS&E package is complete, etc. All application packages would be placed in a queue upon transmission to the BIADOT and date stamped. This submission queue would form the basis for prioritization during any fiscal year. After the queue for the FY is filled up, that is, the obligation limitation is used up, a queue for the following FY would be established.

Alternative Procedure No. 5

Funding and/or programming of construction projects for BIA owned IRR bridges would be based on the prioritization and ranking of deficient bridges. The complete application package would be submitted to the BIADOT and date stamped. Deadline for submission would be March 31 of any FY. Application packages would be ranked and prioritized based on: (i) bridge sufficiency rating; (ii) bridge status with structurally deficient having precedence over functionally obsolete; (iii) bridges on school bus routes; (iv) detour length; (v) ADT; and (vi) truck ADT. Funding and approval would be based on this priority ranking.

Funding Procedures for Non-BIA Owned IRR Bridges

Alternative Procedure No. 1

Funding and/or programming of construction projects would be based on the annual calculation of bridge deck areas for deficient non-BIA owned IRR bridges. This is the same procedure the FHWA uses to distribute HBRRP program funds to the States. From this calculation, a percentage of the obligation limitation would be reserved for each BIA area office.

Alternative Procedure No. 2

Funding and/or programming of construction projects for non-BIA owned IRR bridges would be based on the order of receipt of a complete application package, i.e., eligibility requirements met, PS&E package is complete, etc. All application packages would be placed in a queue upon transmission to the BIADOT and date stamped. This submission queue would form the basis for prioritization during any fiscal year. After the queue for the FY is filled up, that is, the obligation limitation is used up, a queue for the following FY would be established.

Alternative Procedure No. 3

Based on the reasoning presented in items 9 and 11, funding for non-BIA owned IRR bridges would be based on the prioritization and ranking of deficient bridges. Bridge project candidates would be submitted to the BIADOT and date stamped. Application packages would be ranked and prioritized based on: (i) bridge sufficiency rating; (ii) bridge status with structurally deficient having precedence over functionally obsolete; (iii) bridges on school bus routes; (iv) detour length; (v) ADT; and (vi) truck ADT. Funding and approval would be based on this priority ranking.

21. Under alternative procedures presented above, after a bridge project has been completed what happens with the excess or surplus contract authority?

The FHWA expressly invites comment on these general considerations for treatment of excess or surplus contract authority.

Under alternative procedures 1, 2, or 3 for funding BIA owned IRR bridges, once a bridge construction project has been completed under this program, any excess or surplus contract authority would be reserved for use on another approved deficient IRR bridge project within that BIA area.

Under alternative procedures 4 and 5 for funding BIA-owned IRR bridges and alternative procedures 1, 2 or 3 for non-BIA owned IRR bridges, once a bridge construction project has been completed under this program, any excess or surplus contract authority would be returned to FHWA/BIADOT for use on additional approved deficient IRR bridge projects.

(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 202(d) and 315; sec. 1115, Pub. L. 105–178, 112 Stat. 107, 154; 49 CFR 1.48)

Issued on: February 5, 1999.

Kenneth R. Wykle,

Federal Highway Administrator.

APPENDIX—ALTERNATIVES FOR THE IRR BRIDGE PROGRAM

[Deficient IRR Bridges]

Bridge funds to be allocated to the BIA Area Offices:	Alt No.	BIA	Alt No.	Non-BIA
Based on bridge deck area for deficient bridges.	1	Calculation made of the deficient bridges within any BIA Area Office along with percent of deficient bridge deck areas. That percent of the fund is then made available to each Area Office. Funds distributed to Areas and can be spent against bridge projects regardless of State.	1	Calculation made of the deficient bridges within any BIA Area Office along with percent of deficient bridge deck areas. That percent of the fund is then made available to each Area Office. Funds distributed to Areas and can be spent against bridge projects regardless of State. If no, non-BIA bridge projects are identified in any FY, those funds would be made available for BIA owned bridges.

APPENDIX—ALTERNATIVES FOR THE IRR BRIDGE PROGRAM—Continued

[Deficient IRR Bridges]

Bridge funds to be allocated to the BIA Area Offices:	Alt No.	BIA	Alt No.	Non-BIA
Based on bridge deck area for deficient bridges but State specific.	2	Calculation made of the deficient bridges within any BIA Area Office along with percent of deficient bridge deck areas. That percent of the fund is then made available to each Area Office. Funds distributed to Areas and can be spent only against bridge projects in the specific state on which the deficient bridge funds were generated (similar to the not less than 1 percent HBRRP).	.....	Intentionally left blank.
Based on number of deficient bridges.	3	Calculation made of the number of deficient bridges within a given BIA Area Office. Based on the number of deficient bridges, a percent of the fund is then made available to each Area Office. Funds distributed to Areas and can be spent against bridge projects regardless of State..	.....	Intentionally left blank.
Based on order of receipt of the PS&E package (first in first out).	4	Bridges are placed in a queue based on the order of receipt of a complete PS&E package. Funds are made available to the BIA Area Office based on the order of submission.	2	Bridges are placed in a queue based on the order of receipt of a complete PS&E package. Funds are made available to the BIA Area Office based on the order of submission. If no, non-BIA bridge projects are identified in any FY, those funds would be made available for BIA owned bridges.
Based on ranking of received PS&E Packages.	5	Bridges are prioritized and ranked based on SR, status, school bus route, detour length, ADT, and truck ADT. Funds are allocated to the BIA Area Office based on the ranking.	3	Submitted complete PS&E packages are ranked and prioritized by sufficiency rating, etc. Funds are made available to the Area Office based on the priority ranking. If no, non-BIA bridge projects are identified in any FY, those funds would be made available for BIA owned bridges.

[FR Doc. 99–3509 Filed 2–11–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–99–5091]

Information Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD's) intentions to request extension of approval for three years of a currently approved information collection.

DATES: Comments should be submitted on or before April 13, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Crawford Ellerbe, Office of Maritime Labor, Training, and Safety, Maritime Administration, MAR–250, Room 7302, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone 202–366–2643 or fax 202–493–2288. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: Regulations for Making Excess or Surplus Federal Property Available to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, State Maritime Academies, and Approved Nonprofit Maritime Training Institutions.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

OMB Control Number: 2133–0504.

Form Number: None.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 1999.

Summary of Collection of Information: In accordance with 46 U.S.C. 12959, MARAD requires approved maritime training institutions seeking excess or surplus property to provide a statement of need/justification prior to acquiring the excess or surplus property.

Need and Use of the Information: This information collection is used by the requestor to provide a justification of the intended use of the property, and is needed by MARAD to determine compliance with applicable statutory requirements.

Description of Respondents: Maritime training institutions interested in acquiring the excess or surplus property from MARAD.

Annual Responses: 30 responses.

Annual Burden: 120 hours.

Comments: Signed written comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Specifically, address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden and ways to enhance quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET. Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at http://dms.dot.gov.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.