

REGULATORY INFORMATION SERVICE CENTER

Introduction to The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions

AGENCY: Regulatory Information Service Center.

ACTION: Introduction to The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions.

SUMMARY: The Regulatory Flexibility Act requires that agencies publish semiannual regulatory agendas describing regulatory actions they are developing (5 U.S.C. 602). Executive Order 12866 "Regulatory Planning and Review" (58 FR 51735; October 4, 1993) and Office of Management and Budget memoranda implementing section 4 of that Order establish minimum standards for agencies' agendas, including specific types of information for each entry.

The Unified Agenda helps agencies fulfill all of these requirements. All Federal regulatory agencies have chosen to publish their regulatory agendas as part of this publication.

Section 4 of Executive Order 12866 also directs that, as part of their submissions to the October edition of the Unified Agenda, agencies prepare a regulatory plan of the most important significant regulatory actions that the agency reasonably expects to issue in proposed or final form during the upcoming fiscal year. The agency plans appear as the first section of this joint publication; the agency agendas follow.

The **Regulatory Plan** begins with Vice President Gore's statement, followed by an introduction, and then The Regulatory Plans of 30 Federal departments and agencies. Each of these agencies has also submitted a regulatory agenda describing its other regulatory actions. The regulatory agendas for these and 31 other Federal agencies appear in Parts III-LXIII of this issue of the **Federal Register**, followed by indexes to both Plan and Agenda entries.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information about specific regulatory actions, please refer to the Agency Contact listed for each entry.

To provide comment on or to obtain further information about this publication, contact: Cynthia M. Warner, Acting Executive Director, Regulatory Information Service Center (MI), General Services Administration, 1800 F Street NW., Suite 3039, Washington, DC 20405, (202) 482-7340. You may also send comments to us by e-mail at:

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INTRODUCTION TO THE REGULATORY PLAN AND THE UNIFIED AGENDA OF FEDERAL REGULATORY AND DEREGULATORY ACTIONS

I. What Are The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda?

The Regulatory Plan (Plan) serves as a defining statement of the Administration's regulatory and deregulatory policies and priorities. The Plan is part of the fall edition of the Unified Agenda. Each participating agency's regulatory plan contains: (1) A narrative statement of the agency's regulatory priorities and, for most agencies, (2) a description of the most important significant regulatory and deregulatory actions that the agency reasonably expects to issue in proposed or final form during the upcoming fiscal year. This edition includes the regulatory plans of 30 departments and agencies.

The Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions (Unified Agenda) provides

information, in a uniform format, about regulations that the Government is considering or reviewing. The Unified Agenda has appeared in the **Federal Register** twice each year since 1983. This edition includes regulatory agendas from 61 Federal departments and agencies. Agencies of the United States Congress are not included.

The Regulatory Information Service Center (the Center) compiles the Plan and the Unified Agenda for the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), part of the Office of Management and Budget. OIRA is responsible for overseeing the Federal Government's regulatory, paperwork, and information management activities, including implementation of E.O. 12866. The Center also provides information about Federal regulatory activity to the President and his Executive Office, the Congress, agency managers, and the public.

The activities included in the Agenda are, in general, those that will have a regulatory action within the next 12 months. Agencies may include activities that will have a longer timeframe than 12 months. Agency agendas also show actions or reviews completed or withdrawn since the last agenda. The agendas do not contain regulations that were excluded under Executive Order 12866, such as those concerning military or foreign affairs functions or regulations related to agency organization, management, or personnel matters.

A. What Are the Limitations of the Information?

Agencies prepared entries for this publication to give the public notice of their plans to review, propose, and issue regulations. They have tried to predict their activities over the next 12 months as accurately as possible, but dates and schedules are subject to change. Agencies may withdraw some of the regulations now under development, and they may issue or propose other regulations not included in their agendas. Agency actions in the rulemaking process may occur before or after the dates they have listed.

The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda do not create a legal obligation on agencies to adhere to schedules within it or to confine their regulatory activities to those regulations that appear in this publication. The information in this edition is accurate as of October 1, 2000, in the judgment of the submitting agencies, except as otherwise noted by the agencies. In addition, some agencies submitted updates after that date.

Where applicable, individual actions will be subject to review for compliance with applicable Executive orders, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, and the Paperwork Reduction Act at appropriate points in the regulatory process.

II. Why Are The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda Published?

The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda help agencies comply with their obligations under the Regulatory Flexibility Act and various Executive orders and other statutes.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act requires agencies to identify those rules that may have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities (5 U.S.C. 602). Agencies meet that requirement by including the information in their submissions for the Unified Agenda. Agencies may also indicate those regulations that they are reviewing as part of their periodic review of existing rules under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 610).

Executive Order 12866

Executive Order 12866 entitled "Regulatory Planning and Review" (September 30, 1993; 58 FR 51735) requires covered agencies to prepare an agenda of all regulations under development or review. The Order also requires that certain agencies prepare annually a regulatory plan of their "most important significant regulatory actions," which appears as part of the October Unified Agenda.

Executive Order 13132

Executive Order 13132 entitled "Federalism" (August 4, 1999; 64 FR 43255) directs agencies to have an accountable process to ensure meaningful and timely input by State and local officials in the development of regulatory policies that have "federalism implications" as defined in the Order. Under the Order, an agency that is proposing regulations with federalism implications, which either preempt State law or impose nonstatutory unfunded substantial direct compliance costs on State and local governments, must consult with State and local officials early in the process of developing the regulation. In addition, the agency must provide to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a federalism summary impact statement for such regulations, which consists of a description of the extent of the agency's prior consultation with State and local officials, a summary of their concerns and the agency's position supporting the need to issue the regulation, and a statement of the extent to which those concerns have been met. As part of this effort, agencies include in their submissions for the Unified Agenda information on whether their regulatory actions may have an effect on the various levels of government and whether those actions have federalism implications.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995

The *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995* (P.L. 104-4, title II) requires agencies to prepare written assessments of the costs and benefits of significant regulatory actions "that may result in the expenditure by State, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100,000,000 or more . . . in any 1 year . . ." The requirement does not apply to independent regulatory agencies, nor does it apply to certain subject areas excluded by section 4 of the Act. Affected agencies identify in the Unified Agenda those regulatory actions they believe are subject to title II of the Act.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

The *Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act* (P.L. 104-121, title II) established a procedure for congressional review of rules (5 U.S.C. 801 et seq.), which defers, unless exempted, the effective date of a "major" rule for at least 60 days from the publication of the final rule in the **Federal Register**. The Act specifies that a rule is "major" if it has resulted or is likely to result in an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or meets other criteria specified in that Act. If the issuing agency believes that a rule may be major, it indicates this under the "Priority" heading of the entry. The Act provides that the Administrator of OIRA will make the final determination as to whether a rule is major.

III. How Are The Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda Organized?

The **Regulatory Plan** appears in Part II of this edition of the **Federal Register**. Following the Plan, each agency's agenda appears as a separate part. The sections of the Plan and the parts of the Unified Agenda are organized alphabetically in four groups: Cabinet departments; other

executive agencies; the Federal Acquisition Regulation, a joint authority (Agenda only); and independent regulatory agencies. Departments may in turn be divided into subagencies.

Each department's or agency's section of the Plan contains a narrative statement of regulatory priorities followed by a description of the department's or agency's most important significant regulatory and deregulatory actions. Each part of the Agenda begins with a preamble providing information specific to that part. For each agency that requests it, the Center provides a table of contents that appears in the Agenda after the agency preamble.

In the Agenda, each agency presents its entries under one of five headings according to the rulemaking stage of the entry. In the Plan, only the first three stages are applicable. The stages are:

1. *Prerule Stage* — actions agencies will undertake to determine whether or how to initiate rulemaking. Such actions occur prior to a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) and may include Advance Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRMs) and reviews of existing regulations.
2. *Proposed Rule Stage* — actions for which agencies plan to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking as the next step in their rulemaking process or for which the closing date of the NPRM Comment Period is the next step.
3. *Final Rule Stage* — actions for which agencies plan to publish a final rule or an interim final rule or to take other final action as the next step in their rulemaking process.
4. *Long-Term Actions* — items under development but for which the agency does not expect to have a regulatory action within the 12 months after publication of this edition of the Unified Agenda. Some of the entries in this section may contain abbreviated information.
5. *Completed Actions* — actions or reviews the agency has completed or withdrawn since publishing its last agenda. This section also includes items the agency began and completed between issues of the Agenda.

An agency may use subheadings to identify regulations that it has grouped according to particular topics. When these subheadings are used, they appear above the title of the first regulation in each group.

A bullet (•) preceding an entry indicates that the entry appears in this publication for the first time.

All entries are numbered sequentially from the beginning to the end of the Unified Agenda. The sequence number preceding the title of each entry identifies the location of the entry in this edition. The same number is used in the indexes to enable readers to find entries on specific subjects.

This publication contains six indexes. Index A lists entries for which agencies have indicated that they are conducting a periodic review under section 610(c) of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. Index B lists the regulatory actions for which agencies believe that the Regulatory Flexibility Act may require a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis. Index C lists additional regulatory actions for which agencies have chosen to indicate that some impact on small entities is likely even though a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis may not be required. Index D lists entries that agencies believe may have effects on levels of government. Index E lists entries that agencies believe may have federalism implications as defined in Executive Order 13132. Index F is a subject index based on the **Federal Register Thesaurus of Indexing Terms**.

IV. What Information Appears for Each Entry?

All entries in the Unified Agenda contain uniform data elements including, at a minimum, the following information:

Title of the Regulation — a brief description of the subject of the regulation, possibly including section 610 review designation. The notation “Section 610 Review” following the title indicates that the agency has selected the rule for its periodic review of existing rules under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 610(c)). Some agencies have indicated completions of section 610 reviews or rulemaking actions resulting from completed section 610 reviews

Priority — an indication of the significance of the regulation. Agencies assign each entry to one of the following five categories of significance.

(1) Economically Significant

As defined in Executive Order 12866, a rulemaking action that will have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or will adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities. The definition of an “economically significant” rule is similar but not identical to the definition of a “major” rule under 5 U.S.C. 801 (P. L. 104-121). (See below.)

(2) Other Significant

A rulemaking that is not economically significant but is considered significant by the agency. This category includes rules that the agency anticipates will be reviewed under E.O. 12866 or rules that are a priority of the agency head. These rules may or may not be included in the agency’s regulatory plan.

(3) Substantive, Nonsignificant

A rulemaking that has substantive impacts but is neither Significant, nor Routine and Frequent, nor Informational/Administrative/Other.

(4) Routine and Frequent

A rulemaking that is a specific case of a multiple recurring application of a regulatory program in the Code of Federal Regulations and that does not alter the body of the regulation.

(5) Informational/Administrative/Other

A rulemaking that is primarily informational or pertains to agency matters not central to accomplishing the agency’s regulatory mandate but that the agency places in the Unified Agenda to inform the public of the activity.

In addition, if an agency believes that a rule may be “major” under 5 U.S.C. 801 (P.L. 104-121) because it has resulted or is likely to result in an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or meets other criteria specified in that Act, the agency indicates this under the “Priority” heading. (The Act provides that the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs will make the final determination as to whether a rule is major.)

Unfunded Mandates — whether the rule is covered by section 202 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-4). The Act requires that, before issuing an NPRM likely to result in a mandate that may result in expenditures

by State, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of more than \$100 million in 1 year, agencies, other than independent regulatory agencies, shall prepare a written statement containing an assessment of the anticipated costs and benefits of the Federal mandate. If the agency believes the entry is not subject to the Act, this data element will not be printed.

Reinvention — whether the action is part of the Administration’s Reinventing Government effort and, if so, whether the result will be elimination of existing text in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) or revision of text in the CFR to reduce burden or duplication or to streamline requirements. If the action is not specifically part of this effort, the data element will not be printed.

Legal Authority — the section(s) of the United States Code (U.S.C.) or Public Law (P.L.) or the Executive order (E.O.) that authorize(s) the regulatory action. Agencies may provide popular name references to laws in addition to these citations.

CFR Citation — the section(s) of the Code of Federal Regulations that will be affected by the action.

Legal Deadline — whether the action is subject to a statutory or judicial deadline, the date of that deadline, and whether the deadline pertains to an NPRM, a Final Action, or some other action.

Abstract — a brief description of the problem the regulation will address; the need for a Federal solution; to the extent available, alternatives that the agency is considering to address the problem; and potential costs and benefits of the action.

Timetable — the dates and citations (if available) for all past steps and a projected date for at least the next step for the regulatory action. A date printed in the form 02/00/01 means the agency is predicting the month and year the action will take place but not the day it will occur. In some instances, agencies may indicate what the next action will be, but the date of that action is “To Be Determined.” “Next Action Undetermined” indicates the agency does not know what action it will take next. Dates after 1999 are printed in the same form as other dates, using the last two digits of the year.

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Required — whether an analysis is required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) because the rulemaking action is likely to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as defined by the Act.

Small Entities Affected — the types of small entities (businesses, governmental jurisdictions, or organizations) on which the rulemaking action is likely to have an impact as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act. Some agencies have chosen to indicate likely effects on small entities even though they believe that a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis will not be required.

Government Levels Affected — whether the action is expected to affect levels of government and, if so, whether the governments are State, local, tribal, or Federal.

Federalism — whether the action has “federalism implications” as defined in Executive Order 13132. This term refers to actions “that have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.” If the action does not have federalism implications, this data element will not be printed.

Independent regulatory agencies are not required to supply this information.

Agency Contact — the name, title, address, and phone number of a person in the agency who is knowledgeable about the rulemaking action. If available, the agency may also provide the fax number, e-mail address, and TDD for the agency contact.

Procurement — whether the action is related to procurement and, if so, whether it is required by statute and whether it involves a paperwork burden. The Procurement heading appears only if the entry is related to procurement.

Some agencies have provided the following optional information:

Compliance Cost to the Public — the estimated gross compliance cost of the action.

Affected Sectors — the industrial sectors that the action may most affect, either directly or indirectly. Affected Sectors are identified by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

Entries appearing in **The Regulatory Plan** should also include the following information:

Statement of Need — a description of the need for the regulatory action.

Summary of the Legal Basis — a description of the legal basis for the action, including whether any aspect of the action is required by statute or court order.

Alternatives — a description of the alternatives the agency has considered or will consider as required by section 4(c)(1)(B) of E.O. 12866.

Anticipated Costs and Benefits — a description of preliminary estimates of the anticipated costs and benefits of the action.

Risks — a description of the magnitude of the risk the action addresses, the amount by which the agency expects the action to reduce this risk, and the relation of the risk and this risk reduction effort to other risks and risk reduction efforts within the agency's jurisdiction.

V. Abbreviations

The following abbreviations appear throughout this publication:

ANPRM — An Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is a preliminary notice, published in the **Federal Register**, announcing that an agency is considering a regulatory action. The agency issues an ANPRM before it develops a detailed proposed rule. The ANPRM describes the general area that may be subject to regulation and usually asks for public comment on the issues and options being discussed. An ANPRM is issued only when an agency believes it needs to gather more information before proceeding to a notice of proposed rulemaking.

CFR — The Code of Federal Regulations is an annual codification of the general and permanent regulations published in the **Federal Register** by the departments and agencies of the Federal Government. The Code is divided into 50 titles, and each title covers a broad area subject to Federal regulation. The CFR is keyed to and kept up to date by the daily issues of the **Federal Register**.

EO — An Executive order is a directive from the President to executive agencies, issued under constitutional or statutory authority. Executive orders are published in the **Federal Register** and in title 3 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

FR — The **Federal Register** is a daily Federal Government publication that provides a uniform system for publishing Presidential documents, all proposed and final regulations, notices of meetings, and other official documents issued by Federal departments and agencies.

FY — The Federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

NPRM — A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is the document an agency issues and publishes in the **Federal Register** that describes and solicits public comments on a proposed regulatory action. Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), an NPRM must include, at a minimum:

- a statement of the time, place, and nature of the public rulemaking proceeding;
- a reference to the legal authority under which the rule is proposed; and
- either the terms or substance of the proposed rule or a description of the subjects and issues involved.

PL — A Public Law is a law passed by Congress and signed by the President or enacted over his veto. It has general applicability, unlike a private law that applies only to those persons or entities specifically designated. Public laws are numbered in sequence throughout the 2-year life of each Congress; for example, PL 105-4 is the fourth public law of the 105th Congress.

RFA — A Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is a description and analysis of the impact of a rule on small entities, including small businesses, small governmental jurisdictions, and certain small not-for-profit organizations. The Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) requires each agency to prepare an initial RFA for public comment when it is required to publish an NPRM and to make available a final RFA when the final rule is published, unless the agency head certifies that the rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

RIN — The Regulation Identifier Number is assigned by the Regulatory Information Service Center to identify each regulatory action listed in **The Regulatory Plan** and the Unified Agenda, as directed by E.O. 12866 (section 4(b)). Additionally, OMB has asked agencies to include RINs in the headings of their Rule and Proposed Rule documents when publishing them in the **Federal Register**, to make it easier for the public and agency officials to track the publication history of regulatory actions throughout their development.

Seq. No. — The Sequence Number identifies the location of an entry in this publication. Note that a specific regulatory action will have the same RIN throughout its development but will generally have different sequence numbers in different editions of **The Regulatory Plan** and the Unified Agenda.

USC — The United States Code is a consolidation and codification of all general and permanent laws of the United States. The USC is divided into 50 titles, and each title covers a broad area of Federal law.

VI. How Can Users Get Copies of the Plan and the Agenda?

Printed copies of this edition of the **Federal Register** are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325, (202) 512-1800.

Copies of individual agency materials may be available directly from the agency. Please contact the particular agency for further information.

All editions of **The Regulatory Plan** and the **Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions** since October 1995 are also available in electronic form. You can search the Agenda and the Plan on the World Wide Web at:

<http://reginfo.gov>

You may also search the Agenda and the Plan on the Government Printing Office's GPO Access, which is accessible through:

<http://www.access.gpo.gov>

Dated: October 30, 2000.

Cynthia M. Warner,
Acting Executive Director.

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