

JUSTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY REVIEW

Advance Notification Form: Tourist and Other Non-Governmental Activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area, DS-4131, OMB no. 1405-XXXX

The U.S. Government is obligated under Article VII(5)(a) of the Antarctic Treaty to provide advance notification to other Contracting Parties of “all expeditions to and within Antarctica, on the part of its ships or nationals, and all expeditions to Antarctica organized in or proceeding from its territory.” Notice of official USG expeditions is provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF), while the Department of State provides notice of U.S. tourist and non-governmental activities. Filing an Advance Notification Form leads to a determination of U.S. jurisdiction over an activity and triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This mandatory process takes several months to complete. In order for U.S. expedition organizers to meet their EIA requirements before the tourist season begins in October, some Advance Notification Forms must be completed and submitted to the Department before July. Thus, the PRA submission process needs to be completed more quickly than regular processing would allow, preventing the Department from fulfilling its Treaty obligations. The content of the proposed Advance Notification Form has been cleared with both NSF and EPA.

The Department has therefore determined that:

1. This collection is needed prior to the expiration of time periods normally associated with a routine submission for review under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act;
2. This collection is essential to the mission of the Department of State in meeting its Treaty obligations; and
3. The use of normal clearance procedures will prevent the Department obtaining this information in a manner timely enough to permit completion of the required Environmental Impact Assessment before the Antarctic tourist season begins.

Therefore, the Department of State requests emergency OMB approval for this collection by May 31, 2008.

