was published on October 22, 1986 and revised on March 16, 1988.

DATES: The deadline for comments is Monday, April 13, 2015.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Smita Deshpande; 3347 Michelson Drive, Suite 100; Irvine, CA 92612; (949) 724–2245; *D12.NOP241.91@dot.ca.gov;* Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Effective July 1, 2007, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) assigned, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) assumed, environmental responsibilities for this project pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327. Caltrans as the assigned National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) agency, in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and United States Army Corps of Engineers, will prepare a Supplemental Draft EIS on a proposal for a median-to-median connector between State Route 241 (SR–241) and the State Route 91 (SR–91) Express Lanes, project in Orange County and Riverside County, California.

The proposed median-to-median connector project encompasses 12–ORA–241 (PM 36.1/39.1), 12–ORA–91 (PM 14.7/18.9), and 08–RIV–91 (PM 0.0/1.5) for a length of approximately 8.7 miles. Anticipated federal approvals include an FHWA Air Quality Conformity Determination, Biological Opinion Amendment and permits under Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Caltrans District 12, in cooperation with the Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency (F/ETCA), proposes to construct the median-to-median connector from State Route 241 (SR–241) to the State Route 91 (SR–91) Express Lanes. The proposed median-to-median connector is phase 2 of the Eastern Transportation Corridor (ETC) project previously approved in 1994. It will provide improved access between SR–241 and SR–91 and is proposed to be a tolled facility. Caltrans will be the lead agency for the project. The United States Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service were identified as cooperating agencies in the corresponding 1991 ETC Draft EIS and 1994 ETC Final EIS.

The SR–241/SR–91 Express Lane Connector was originally evaluated as a SR–241/SR–91 high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) direct connector in the 1991 ETC Draft EIS and 1994 ETC Final EIS (both of which studied a broader project area with improvements on SR–133, SR–241 and SR–261). The Systems Management Concept (SMC) for the ETC project proposed that the project would be staged, incorporating general purpose traffic and eventually HOV lanes, to meet the forecasted demand. Under the SMC, ETC construction would be completed in one stage with three or more phases.

To implement Phase 2 of the ETC project, a Supplemental Draft EIS is being prepared to focus on the eastern portion of the original project and to address changes to environmental conditions and regulatory requirements. Various alternatives were studied in the 1991 ETC Draft EIS and 1994 ETC Final EIS; however, the Supplemental Draft EIS will include a No Build and one Build Alternative for the median-to-median connector only.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, cooperating agencies, participating agencies, local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. Environmental Review of the project is anticipated to occur from 2015 through 2017. A public scoping meeting is not scheduled at this time; should you be interested, please let us know in writing. A public hearing will be held in 2016. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Supplemental Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the Supplemental Draft EIS should be directed to Caltrans at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: March 16, 2015.

Shawn Oliver,

Team Leader, Right of Way and Environment, Federal Highway Administration, Sacramento, California.

[FR Doc. 2015–06415 Filed 3–19–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Petition for Exemption From the Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard; BMW of North America, LLC

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Grant of petition for exemption.

SUMMARY: This document grants in full the BMW of North America, LLC (BMW) petition for an exemption of the X1 multi-purpose vehicle line (MPV) in accordance with 49 CFR part 543, *Exemption from the Theft Prevention Standard.* This petition is granted because the agency has determined that the antitheft device to be placed on the line as standard equipment is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541, *Federal Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard* (Theft Prevention Standard). BMW requested confidential treatment for specific information in its petition that the agency will address by separate letter.

DATES: The exemption granted by this notice is effective beginning with the 2016 model year (MY).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Carlita Ballard, Office of International Policy, Fuel Economy and Consumer Programs, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building, Room W43–439, Washington, DC 20590. Ms. Ballard's telephone number is (202) 366–5222. Her fax number is (202) 493–2990.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a petition dated November 21, 2014, BMW requested an exemption from the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard for the X1 MPV vehicle line beginning with MY 2016. The petition requested an exemption from parts-marking pursuant to 49 CFR part 543, *Exemption from Vehicle Theft Prevention Standard*, based on the installation of an antitheft device as standard equipment for the entire vehicle line.

Under 49 CFR 543.5(a), a manufacturer may petition NHTSA to grant an exemption for one vehicle line per model year. BMW stated that its X1 MPV line will be replacing its X1 passenger car line beginning with MY 2016. In its petition, BMW provided a detailed description and diagram of the identity, design, and location of the components of the antitheft device for

its X1 MPV line. BMW stated that the X1 MPV line will be installed with an engine immobilizer device as standard equipment. Key features of the antitheft device will include a key with a transponder, loop antenna (coil), engine control unit (DME/DDE) with encoded start release input, an electronically coded vehicle immobilizer/car access system (EWS/CAS) control unit and a passive immobilizer. BMW will not offer an audible or visible alarm feature on the proposed device.

BMW stated that the antitheft device is a passive vehicle immobilizer system. BMW further stated that the EWS immobilizer device prevents the vehicle from being driven away under its own engine power. BMW further stated that the EWS immobilizer device also fulfills the requirements of the European vehicle insurance companies.

BMW stated that activation of its immobilizer device occurs automatically when the engine is shut off and the vehicle key is removed from the ignition lock cylinder. Deactivation of the device occurs when the Start/Stop button is pressed and the vehicle starting process begins. BMW stated that deactivation cannot be carried out with a mechanical key, but must occur electronically. Specifically, BMW stated that its transponder sends key data to the EWS/CAS control unit. The correct key data must be recognized by the EWS/CAS control unit in order for the vehicle to start. The transponder contains a chip which is integrated in the key and powered by a battery. The transponder also consists of a transmitter/receiver which communicates with the EWS/CAS control unit. The EWS/CAS control unit provides the interface to the loop antenna (coil), engine control unit and starter. The ignition and fuel supply are only released when a correct coded release signal has been sent by the EWS/CAS control unit to deactivate the device and allow the vehicle to start. When the EWS/CAS control unit has sent a correct release signal, and after the initial starting value, the release signal becomes a rolling, ever-changing, random code that is stored in the DME/DDE and EWS/CAS control units. The DME/DDE must identify the release signal and only then will the ignition signal and fuel supply be released.

BMW stated that the vehicle is also equipped with a central-locking system that can be operated to lock and unlock all doors or to unlock only the driver's door, thereby preventing forced entry into the vehicle through the passenger doors. The vehicle can be further secured by locking the doors and hood using either the key lock cylinder on the driver's door or the remote frequency remote control. BMW stated that the frequency for the remote control constantly changes to prevent an unauthorized person from opening the vehicle by intercepting the signals of its remote control.

BMW further stated that all of its vehicles are currently equipped with antitheft devices as standard equipment, including the BMW X1 MPV line. BMW compared the effectiveness of its antitheft device with devices which NHTSA has previously determined to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as would compliance with the parts-marking requirements of Part 541. BMW stated that the antitheft device that it intends to install on its X1 MPV line for MY 2016 has been sufficient to grant exemptions for other vehicle lines. Specifically, BMW has installed its antitheft device on its X1 (passenger car), X3, X4 and X5 vehicle lines, as well as its Carline 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Z4, and MINI vehicle lines, all which have been granted parts-marking exemptions by the agency. BMW asserts that theft data have indicated a decline in theft rates for vehicle lines that have been equipped with antitheft devices similar to that which it proposes to install on the X1 MPV line. BMW also stated that for MY/CY 2011, the agency's data show that theft rates for its lines are: 0.69 (1-series), 0.62 (3-series), 0.63 (5-series), 1.08 (7-series), 0.26 (X3), 0.00 (X5), 0.00 (X6), 0.55 (Z4/M), and 0.35 (MINI). Using an average of 3 MYs data (2010–2012), NHTSA's theft rates for BMW's 1 series, 3 series, 5 series, 6 series, 7 series, X3, X5, X6, Z4/M and MINI vehicle lines are 0.5503, 07177, 0.7314, 0.0000, 1.7952, 0.2055, 0.5501, 2.5840, 0.4696 and 0.3770 respectively. Theft data for BMW's X1 (passenger car), X4, and Carline 4 is not available.

BMW's submission is considered a complete petition as required by 49 CFR 543.7, in that it meets the general requirements contained in § 543.5 and the specific content requirements of § 543.6.

In addressing the specific content requirements of Part 543.6, BMW provided information on the reliability and durability of its device. To ensure reliability and durability of the device, BMW conducted tests and believes that the device is reliable and durable because it complied with its own specific standards and the antitheft device is installed on other vehicle lines for which the agency has granted a parts-marking exemption. Further assuring the reliability and durability of the X1 antitheft device, BMW notes that the mechanical keys for the X1 MPV line are unique. Specifically, a special key blank, a special key cutting machine and the vehicle's unique code are needed to duplicate a key. BMW stated that new keys will only be issued to authorized persons, and the guide-ways that are milled in the mechanical keys make the locks almost impossible to pick and the keys impossible to duplicate on the open market.

BMW's proposed device lacks an audible or visible alarm, therefore, this device cannot perform one of the functions listed in 49 CFR 543.6(a)(3), that is, to call attention to unauthorized attempts to enter or move the vehicle. However, in its November 2014 petition, BMW asserted that in a previous **Federal Register** notice published by the agency (58 FR 44872, dated August 25, 1993), NHTSA's review of the theft data for 10 General Motors' (GM) vehicle lines that had been granted partial exemptions concluded that the lack of an audible and visible alarm had not prevented the antitheft device from being effective and that despite the absence of an audible or visible alarm, when placed on vehicle lines as standard equipment, the GM antitheft devices ''continue to be as effective in deterring and reducing motor vehicle theft as compliance with parts-marking requirements.'' Therefore, BMW expects that the X1's antitheft device will be just as effective as parts-marking.

Based on the supporting evidence submitted by BMW, the agency believes that the antitheft device for the BMW X1 MPV line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard (49 CFR part 541). The agency concludes that the device will provide four of the five types of performance listed in § 543.6(a)(3): promoting activation; preventing defeat or circumvention of the device by unauthorized persons; preventing operation of the vehicle by unauthorized entrants; and ensuring the reliability and durability of the device.

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 33106 and 49 CFR 543.7(b), the agency grants a petition for exemption from the parts-marking requirements of Part 541, either in whole or in part, if it determines that, based upon supporting evidence, the standard equipment antitheft device is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with the parts-marking requirements of Part 541. The agency finds that BMW has provided adequate reasons for its belief that the antitheft device for the X1 MPV line is likely to be as effective in reducing and deterring motor vehicle theft as compliance with

the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard (49 CFR part 541). This conclusion is based on the information BMW provided about its device.

For the foregoing reasons, the agency hereby grants in full BMW's petition for exemption for the MY 2016 X1 MPV line from the parts-marking requirements of 49 CFR part 541. The agency notes that 49 CFR part 541, Appendix A–1, identifies those lines that are exempted from the Theft Prevention Standard for a given MY. 49 CFR 543.7(f) contains publication requirements incident to the disposition of all Part 543 petitions. Advanced listing, including the release of future product nameplates, the beginning model year for which the petition is granted and a general description of the antitheft device is necessary in order to notify law enforcement agencies of new vehicle lines exempted from the parts-marking requirements of the Theft Prevention Standard.

If BMW decides not to use the exemption for this line, it must formally notify the agency. If such a decision is made, the line must be fully marked as required by 49 CFR 541.5 and 541.6 (marking of major component parts and replacement parts).

NHTSA notes that if BMW wishes in the future to modify the device on which this exemption is based, the company may have to submit a petition to modify the exemption.

Part 543.7(d) states that a Part 543 exemption applies only to vehicles that belong to a line exempted under this part and equipped with the anti-theft device on which the line's exemption is based. Further, § 543.9(c)(2) provides for the submission of petitions ''to modify an exemption to permit the use of an antitheft device similar to but differing from the one specified in that exemption.''

The agency wishes to minimize the administrative burden that Part 543.9(c)(2) could place on exempted vehicle manufacturers and itself. The agency did not intend Part 543 to require the submission of a modification petition for every change to the components or design of an antitheft device. The significance of many such changes could be *de minimis*. Therefore, NHTSA suggests that if the manufacturer contemplates making any changes the effects of which might be characterized as *de minimis*, it should consult the agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

Issued in Washington, DC, under authority delegated in 49 CFR Part 1.95.

Raymond R. Posten,

Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.

[FR Doc. 2015–06384 Filed 3–19–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Funding Availability and Solicitation of Applications for Magnetic Levitation Projects

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of funding availability.

SUMMARY: This notice of funding availability (NOFA or Notice) details the grant application requirements and submission procedures for obtaining up to $27.8 million in Federal funding, as authorized by sections 1101(a)(18) and 1307 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU, Public Law 109–59 (August 10, 2005)), as amended by section 102 of the SAFETEA–LU Technical Corrections Act of 2008, Public Law 110–244 (June 6, 2008), for existing magnetic levitation (maglev) projects located east of the Mississippi River. Pursuant to the Joint Committee statement accompanying the SAFETEA–LU Technical Corrections Act, three projects are eligible for funding under this Notice: The ''Pittsburgh project'', the ''Baltimore-Washington project'', and the ''Atlanta-Chattanooga project''. FRA previously announced the availability of funds for maglev projects located east of the Mississippi River pursuant to a NOFA issued on October 16, 2008, but one of the selected applicants has decided not to pursue the project for which the funds were allocated resulting in the availability of the funds for this Notice. Funds awarded under this Notice can be used for preconstruction planning activities and capital costs of a viable maglev project.

DATES: Applications for funding under this NOFA are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EST, April 20, 2015. Applications for funding received after 5:00 p.m. EST on April 20, 2015, will not be considered. See Section 4 of this Notice for additional information regarding the application process.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov. For any required or supporting application materials that an applicant is unable to submit via Grants.gov (such as oversized engineering drawings), an applicant may submit an original and two (2) copies to Renee Cooper, Office of Program Delivery, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Mail Stop 20, Washington, DC 20590. However, due to delays caused by enhanced screening of mail delivered via the U.S. Postal Service, applicants are advised to use other means of conveyance (such as courier service) to assure timely receipt of materials.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information regarding this Notice, please contact Renee Cooper, Office of Program Delivery, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Mail Stop 20, Washington, DC 20590; Email: *FRA-Grants@dot.gov;* Phone: (202) 493–0491; Fax: (202) 493–6333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FRA strongly suggests that applicants read this Notice in its entirety prior to preparing application materials. There are programmatic prerequisites and administrative requirements described herein that applicants must comply with in order to submit an application and be considered for funding.

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Section 1: Funding Opportunity Description

Section 102 of the SAFETEA–LU Technical Corrections Act (Public Law 110–244, June 6, 2008) (the 2008 Act), amended sections 1101(a)(18) and 1307 of SAFETEA–LU and provided $45 million in contract authority for maglev projects located east of the Mississippi River. Of the funding available for projects east of the Mississippi River ($45 million), approximately $27.8 million in funding is available for award under this NOFA.

In the Joint Explanatory Statement of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Environmental and Public Works, Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, and Commerce, Science and Transportation Committees accompanying the 2008 Act (the Joint Explanatory Statement), Congress explained that in amending SAFETEA–LU to allow FRA discretion to award funds to ''projects'' located east of the Mississippi River, ''the intent is to limit the eligible projects to three existing