Issued on: August 3, 2015.

Larry W. Minor,
Associate Administrator for Policy.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration


Notice of a Buy America Waiver for Replacement Gondola Components

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of a Buy America waiver.

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) received a Buy America waiver request from the Colorado Department of Transportation on behalf of the Town of Mountain Village for replacement parts for a gondola rehabilitation project. A non-availability waiver is needed because Mountain Village intends to rehabilitate the gondola system with FTA funding and the replacement parts do not comply with Buy America requirements. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(3)(A), FTA published a notice of the waiver request and sought public comment in deciding whether to grant the request. Having received no comments opposing the waiver, FTA is hereby granting a non-availability waiver for the replacement gondola components to be procured by Mountain Village for the gondola refurbishment projects described herein.

DATES: This waiver is effective immediately.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Wong, FTA Attorney-Advisor, at (202) 366–0675 or Richard.Wong@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this notice is to announce that FTA is granting a non-availability waiver for Mountain Village’s procurement of replacement components for its gondolas used to provide public transportation service.

With certain exceptions, FTA’s Buy America requirements prevent FTA from obligating an amount that may be appropriated to carry out its program for a project unless “the steel, iron, and manufactured goods used in the project are produced in the United States.” 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(1). A manufactured product is considered produced in the United States if: (1) All of the manufacturing processes for the product take place in the United States; and (2) all of the components of the product are of U.S. origin. A component is considered of U.S. origin if it is manufactured in the United States, regardless of the origin of its subcomponents, 49 CFR 661.5(d). If, however, FTA determines that “the steel, iron, and goods produced in the United States are not produced in a sufficient and reasonably available amount or are not of a satisfactory quality,” then FTA may issue a waiver (non-availability waiver). 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(2)(B); 49 CFR 661.7(c).

The Town of Mountain Village provides free public transportation via gondola (also known as a tramway) between Mountain Village and the Town of Telluride. The gondola operates continuous fixed route service 17 hours per day, 7 days per week, 280 or more days per year, serving over 2,000,000 passengers per year.

According to Mountain Village, the existing low-speed conveyor components (bearings, pulleys, tires and other related components) and gondola grip components (coil springs, movable jaws, fixed jaws, bearings, bolts, bushings, wheels and other related components) are nearing the end of their useful service lives and are showing signs of wear and fatigue. Without periodic capital equipment replacement/rebuild, the likelihood of mechanical downtime increases significantly, equating to prolonged service outages for commuters. Mountain Village also needs to refurbish the 59 gondola cabins due to wear and tear. Mountain Village intends to replace these gondola components over several phases during the coming years. Specifically, procurement of the low-speed conveyor components and the grips will be procured in two phases, one in 2015 and one in 2016; parts for the cabin refurbishment are anticipated to be procured over a six-year period.

The non-availability waiver is effective for all phases of these projects, but expires upon completion of these projects.

Mountain Village asserted that there are no companies that manufacture these gondola components in the United States and that each of the gondola components to be procured is available only from a single source—Doppelmayer and CWA, the original equipment manufacturers. The Colorado Passenger Tramway Safety Board (CPTSB), the state agency responsible for regulating the safety of aerial tramways within the State of Colorado, agreed and noted that because gondolas are specialized and the market is limited, there are no aftermarket manufacturers for these gondola components. The CPTSB concluded that, for these parts, there are no alternatives to the original equipment manufacturers, which do not manufacture the replacement components in the United States.

Although there is a new U.S. manufacturer for tramways in the United States, it was not yet viable to manufacture the specific components needed for the Mountain Village gondolas. Therefore, Mountain Village needs to proceed with Limited Availability Waiver (non-availability waiver) to complete the gondola refurbishment projects to maintain service. Mountain Village intends to spend $12 million over a six-year period, but if Mountain Village cannot complete the gondola refurbishment projects, the gondola will need to be replaced, which could cost significantly more.

A Limited Availability Waiver (non-availability waiver) provides for the limited purchase of components that are not manufactured in the United States, but are available in the United States. FTA has a long history of allowing limited availability waivers for gondola refurbishment projects. The CPTSB reviewed this request and determined that it would be in the public’s interest to grant the waiver, based on the above arguments. The CPTSB concluded that the waiver is needed because the gondola rehabilitation project is critical for Mountain Village to continue to provide public transportation service to its residents.

Because Mountain Village has no alternatives, FTA is granting this waiver, which will allow Mountain Village to rehabilitate its gondola system with FTA funding and continue to provide public transportation service to its residents.
United States, it does not produce detachable trams like the one used by Mountain Village. Additionally, parts for the remainder of the tramway are of a different design and are not interchangeable with those used on other gondola systems.

On Wednesday, July 22, 2015, and in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(3)(A), FTA published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the Colorado Department of Transportation Buy America waiver request made on behalf of Mountain Village (80 FR 43552), seeking comment from all interested parties, including potential vendors and suppliers. The comment period closed on August 5, 2015, and no comments were received.

Based on the representations from the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado Passenger Tramway Safety Board, and the lack of any comments opposing the waiver, FTA is granting a non-availability waiver for replacement gondola components, limited to the parts procured by Mountain Village for the gondola refurbishment projects described above.

Issued on August 17, 2015.

Dana C. Nifosi,
Acting Chief Counsel.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA–2015–0077]

Decision That Certain Nonconforming Motor Vehicles Are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Grant of Petitions.

SUMMARY: This document announces decisions by NHTSA that certain motor vehicles not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) are eligible for importation into the United States because they are substantially similar to vehicles originally manufactured for sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturers as complying with the safety standards, and they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards or because they have safety features that comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all applicable FMVSS.

DATES: These decisions became effective on the dates specified in Annex A.

ADDRESSES: For further information contact Mr. George Stevens, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202–366–5308).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable FMVSS shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and/or sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable FMVSS.

Where there is no substantially similar U.S.-certified motor vehicle, 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(B) permits a nonconforming motor vehicle to be admitted into the United States if its safety features comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all applicable FMVSS based on destructive test data or such other evidence as NHTSA decides to be adequate.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the Federal Register of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the Federal Register.

NHTSA received petitions from registered importers to decide whether the vehicles listed in Annex A to this notice are eligible for importation into the United States. To afford an opportunity for public comment, NHTSA published notice of these petitions as specified in Annex A. The reader is referred to those notices for a thorough description of the petitions.

Comments: No substantive comments were received in response to the petitions identified in Appendix A.

NHTSA Decision: Accordingly, on the basis of the foregoing, NHTSA hereby decides that each motor vehicle listed in Annex A to this notice, which was not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable FMVSS, is either substantially similar to a motor vehicle manufactured for importation into and/or sale in the United States, and certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, as specified in Annex A, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable FMVSS or has safety features that comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

Vehicle Eligibility Number for Subject Vehicles: The importer of a vehicle admissible under any final decision must indicate on the form HS–7 accompanying entry the appropriate vehicle eligibility number indicating that the vehicle is eligible for entry. Vehicle eligibility numbers assigned to vehicles admissible under this decision are specified in Annex A.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), (a)(1)(B) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.7; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.95 and 501.8.

Jeffrey M. Giuseppe,
Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.

ANNEX A—Nonconforming Motor Vehicles Decided To Be Eligible for Importation

1. Docket No. NHTSA–2014–0048
Notice of Petition Published at: 79 FR 26804 (May 9, 2014)
Vehicle Eligibility Number: VSP–567 (effective date June 24, 2014)

Nonconforming Vehicles: 2002 BMW Z3 Passenger Cars
Substantially Similar U.S. Certified Vehicles: 2002 BMW Z3 Passenger Cars
Notice of Petition Published at: 79 FR 56851 (September 23, 2014)
Vehicle Eligibility Number: VSP–568 (effective date November 5, 2014)

Nonconforming Vehicles: 2008 Cadillac Escalade Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles
Substantially Similar U.S. Certified Vehicles: 2008 Cadillac Escalade Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles
Notice of Petition Published at: 80 FR 36404 (June 24, 2015)
Vehicle Eligibility Number: VSP–572 (effective date July 31, 2015)

Nonconforming Vehicles: 1991 BMW M3 Convertible Passenger Cars