premium or premiums for sureties as it deems reasonable and necessary,” and to administer the SBG Program “on a prudent and economically justifiable basis.” 15 U.S.C. 694(b)(h). SBA assesses a guarantee fee against both the small business concern (the Principal) and the Surety and deposits these fees into a revolving fund to cover the program’s liabilities and certain program expenses.

SBA last changed the fees over 12 years ago when the fee charged to the Sureties was increased from 20% to 26% of the bond premium and the fee charged to Principals increased from $6.00 per thousand dollars of the contract amount to $7.29 per thousand dollars of the contract amount. Those fees have been in effect since April 3, 2006. At that time, SBA determined that the program’s revolving fund was insufficient to cover projected, unfunded liabilities. See 71 FR 9632 (February 24, 2006). SBA increased the guarantee fees to address the projected deficiency. Over the past 12 years, with the increased fee amounts, the revolving fund has accumulated sufficient funds to support the program.

SBA’s rules provide that the amount of the fees to be paid by the Surety and the Principal “will be determined by SBA and published in Notices in the Federal Register from time to time.” See 13 CFR 115.32(b) and (c) and 115.66. The purpose of this document is to announce that, for the one year period beginning October 1, 2018, the Surety fee will decrease from 26% of the bond premium to 20% of the bond premium and the Principal fee will decrease from $7.29 per thousand dollars of the contract amount to $6 per thousand dollars of the contract amount.

As indicated above, the decreases in the fees are temporary and will be in effect for guaranteed bonds approved during the one year period beginning October 1, 2018, and ending September 30, 2019. During the year, SBA will evaluate whether the lower fees will result in an increase in the bond activity level of the SBG Program and, if so, whether any such increased level of activity will generate sufficient revenues to offset the reduced fee amounts. After carefully reviewing program performance during the year, SBA will determine whether the guarantee fees should remain at these new amounts or if they should revert to the higher amounts or otherwise be changed.

SBA invites public comments on the above stated fee decreases. Please clearly identify paper and electronic comments as “Public Comments on Fee Decreases under the SBG Program: Docket No. SBA–2018–0007” and submit them by one of the methods identified in the ADDRESSES section of this document. SBA will consider the comments and determine whether any revisions are necessary.

Authority: 13 CFR 115.32(b) and (c) and 115.66.


William Manger,
Associate Administrator, Office of Capital Access.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 10479]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Keystone XL Pipeline Mainline Alternative Route in Nebraska

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of State (Department) announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the Proposed Keystone XL Pipeline Mainline Alternative Route in Nebraska for public review and comment. The Draft EA evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Keystone XL Mainline Alternative Route —consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969— in support of the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) review of TransCanada Keystone Pipeline, L.P.’s (TransCanada) application for a right-of-way.

DATES: The public comment period ends on August 29, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted at https://www.regulations.gov by entering the title of this Notice or Docket Number: DOS–2018–0031 into the search field, and then following the prompts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Draft EA, along with detailed records on the proposed project and general information about the Presidential permit process, are available at: https://keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 26, 2017, TransCanada resubmitted its Presidential permit application for the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. On March 23, 2017, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs determined that issuance of a Presidential permit to TransCanada to construct, connect, operate, and maintain at the border of the United States pipeline facilities to transport crude oil from Canada to the United States would serve the national interest.