

provision of property or services or otherwise, or affords him an opportunity to do so which is different from that afforded others under the program (including the opportunity to participate in the program as an employee but only to the extent set forth in paragraph (c) of this section);

(vii) Denies a person the same opportunity or consideration given others to be selected or retained or otherwise to participate as a contractor, subcontractor, or subgrantee;

(viii) Denies a person the opportunity to participate as a member of a planning or advisory body which is an integral part of the program.

(2) [Reserved]

(3) In determining the site or location of facilities, a recipient or other party subject to this part may not make selections with the purpose of excluding persons from, denying them the benefits of, or subjecting them to discrimination under any program to which this part applies, on the grounds of race, color or national origin; or with the purpose of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the Act or this part.

(4) As used in this section, the services, financial aid, or other benefits provided under a program receiving Federal financial assistance shall be deemed to include any service, financial aid, or other benefit provided or made available in or through or utilizing a facility provided with the aid of Federal financial assistance.

(5) The enumeration of specific forms of prohibited discrimination in this paragraph and paragraph (c) of this section does not limit the generality of the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) *Employment practices.* Where a primary objective of the Federal financial assistance to a program to which this part applies is to provide employment, a recipient or other party subject to this part shall not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, subject a person to discrimination on the ground of race, color, or national origin in its employment practices under such program (including recruitment or recruitment advertising, hiring, firing, upgrading, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation or benefits, selection for training or apprenticeship, use of facilities, and treatment of employees). The requirements applicable to construction employment under any such program shall be in addition to those specified in or pursuant to Part III of Executive Order 11246 or any Executive order

which supersedes it. Federal financial assistance to programs under laws funded or administered by the Department that has as a primary objective the providing of employment include those set forth in appendix A II of this part.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

15 CFR Parts 8 and 20

[Docket No. 260107-0012]

RIN 0605-AA76

Removing Outdated Language From Regulatory Definitions of “United States”

AGENCY: Office of Civil Rights, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: By this rule, the Department of Commerce (Department) amends the definition of the term “United States” set forth in two of its regulations. Specifically, this rule removes references to “the Canal Zone,” which is no longer part of the United States, and makes other minor edits to ensure that the two definitions are identical. This action is necessary to ensure that the Department’s regulations are accurate, up-to-date, and consistent. The intended effect is to eliminate outdated language, reduce inconsistencies across the Department’s regulations, and minimize the possibility of confusion.

DATES: Effective April 16, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Sweeney, Senior Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, at (202) 482-1395.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Department originally published the regulations at 15 CFR part 8 and 15 CFR part 20 in final rules on July 5, 1973 (38 FR 17938), and August 13, 1986 (51 FR 28926), respectively. The regulations at 15 CFR part 8 were promulgated to effectuate Section 602 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1), which directs each Federal department and agency to issue regulations implementing the statutory prohibition on discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Similarly, the regulations at 15 CFR part 20 were promulgated to effectuate the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101 *et seq.*), and the corresponding government-wide regulations at 45 CFR part 90, which

establish a general prohibition against discrimination on the basis of age. Both 15 CFR part 8 and 15 CFR part 20 include a regulation defining the term “United States” to include “the Canal Zone”—a reference to the Panama Canal Zone. *See* 15 CFR 8.3(c); 15 CFR 20.3(o). As relevant for 15 CFR part 20, the government-wide regulations at 45 CFR part 90 likewise set forth a definition of “United States” that includes “the Canal Zone.” 45 CFR part 90.4.

The Panama Canal Zone was an exclusive concession of the United States from 1903 to 1979. Thereafter, the Canal was jointly controlled by the United States and the country of Panama until 1999. Then, on December 31, 1999, the United States officially transferred full control of the Canal to Panama. The regulatory definitions of the term “United States” set forth in 15 CFR 8.3(c) and 15 CFR 20.3(o) have not been updated to reflect these historical developments and still indicate that the Canal Zone is part of the United States.

II. Discussion

By this rule, the Department is updating the definitions of the term “United States” set forth in 15 CFR 8.3(c) and 15 CFR 20.3(o) to accurately reflect the current scope of the United States and its territories and possessions. In particular, the Department is removing from both §§ 8.3(c) and 20.3(o) references to the Panama Canal Zone, as that Zone is no longer considered part of the United States. This removal will promote not only accuracy but also consistency across the Department’s regulations, as 15 CFR 801.2(a), for instance, does not define “United States” to include the Canal Zone. *See* 15 CFR 801.2(a) (defining the term “United States,” “when used in a geographic sense,” to mean “the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and all territories and possessions of the United States.”). This removal will, however, create some inconsistency between the Department’s age discrimination regulations (15 CFR part 20) and the government-wide age discrimination regulations (45 CFR part 90), since “United States” is defined in 45 CFR 90.4 to include the Canal Zone. The Department nevertheless finds it appropriate to amend §§ 8.3(c) and 20.3(o) to ensure the accuracy of—and consistency throughout—the Department’s own regulations.

The Department also finds it appropriate to make two other minor amendments to ensure that §§ 8.3(c) and 20.3(o) are identical. Specifically, the Department is (i) ensuring that both definitions explicitly mention the

Northern Mariana Islands, and (ii) adopting uniform language for the reference to the States (“the fifty States”).

III. Classification

A. Administrative Procedure Act

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2), the provisions of the APA requiring notice of proposed rulemaking and the opportunity for public participation are inapplicable to this rule because it relates to “agency management or personnel or to public property, loans, grants, benefits, or contracts.” This rule modifies definitions set forth in 15 CFR parts 8 and 20, both of which establish nondiscrimination requirements in connection with Federal assistance. Additionally, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Department finds good cause to waive notice of proposed rulemaking and the opportunity for public participation because public participation would be unnecessary. This rule only removes an outdated definition of the United States that no longer aligns with its current boundaries and territories. Public participation would not affect the legal and accurate definition of the United States.

B. Executive Orders 12866, 14192, 13132

The Office of Management and Budget has determined this rule is not significant pursuant to E.O. 12866. This rule is an E.O. 14192 deregulatory action. This rule does not contain policies having federalism implications as the term is defined in E.O. 13132.

C. Regulatory Flexibility Act

Because a notice of proposed rulemaking and an opportunity for public participation are not required to be given for this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2), the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are not applicable. Accordingly, no regulatory flexibility analysis is required, and none has been prepared.

D. Executive Order 12250

Pursuant to Executive Order 12250, the Department of Justice has the responsibility to “review . . . proposed rules . . . of the Executive agencies” implementing nondiscrimination statutes such as Title VI in order to identify those which are inadequate, unclear or unnecessarily inconsistent.” The Department of Justice has reviewed and approved this rule.

E. Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule will not impose additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements

under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501, et seq.

List of Subjects in 15 CFR Part 8

Administrative practice and procedure, Civil rights, Equal employment opportunity, Government contracts, Grant programs, Grants administration.

15 CFR Part 20

Administrative practice and procedure, Civil rights, Grant programs, Public assistance programs.

Dated: April 13, 2026.

Paul Dabbar,

Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, parts 8 and 20 of title 15 of the Code of Federal Regulations are amended as follows:

PART 8—NONDISCRIMINATION IN FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—EFFECTUATION OF TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

■ 1. The authority citation for part 8 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sec. 602, Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–1).

■ 2. Amend § 8.3 by revising paragraph (c) to read as follows:

§ 8.3 Definitions

* * * * *

(c) United States means the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Wake Island, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States.

* * * * *

PART 20—NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE IN PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

■ 3. The authority citation for part 20 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq. and the government-wide regulations implementing the Act, 45 CFR part 90.

■ 4. Amend § 20.3 by revising paragraph (o) to read as follows:

§ 20.3 Definitions.

* * * * *

(o) United States means the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Wake Island, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the

territories and possessions of the United States.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

15 CFR Part 28

[Docket No. 260311–0068]

RIN 0605–AA73

Removing Redundant, Obsolete, and Inefficient Provisions From the Regulations Governing Restrictions on Lobbying

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Commerce (Commerce).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: By this rule, Commerce is amending its regulations governing restrictions on lobbying. Specifically, Commerce is amending said regulations by removing two redundant and unnecessary compliance provisions and by removing two reporting requirements that are obsolete and unwarranted. The intended effects of this action are to eliminate redundancy, promote administrative efficiency, and update Commerce’s lobbying regulations to properly reflect and implement the underlying statutory authority in its current form.

DATES: The rule is effective May 18, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Sweeney, Senior Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, at (202) 482–1395.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Commerce is amending its regulations at 15 CFR part 28, “New Restrictions on Lobbying.” These regulations implement section 319 of Public Law 101–121 (31 U.S.C. 1352), which established government-wide restrictions on the use of appropriated funds for lobbying activities in connection with federal contracts, grants, loans, and cooperative agreements. The primary purpose of part 28 is to ensure transparency and accountability by requiring certification and disclosure of lobbying activities intended to influence federal executive or legislative branch officials regarding such federal awards.

Commerce, along with numerous other executive branch agencies, originally established these regulations through a government-wide interim final rule published on February 26, 1990 (55 FR 6735, 6748).

On January 15, 2026, Commerce issued a proposed rule to amend part 28