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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
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MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Shalanda D. Young
Director

SUBJECT: Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub. L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build America, Buy America Act (“the Act”). Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52. The Act strengthens Made in America Laws¹ and will bolster America’s industrial base, protect national security, and support high-paying jobs. The Act requires that no later than May 14, 2022—180 days after the enactment of the IIJA—the head of each covered Federal agency² shall ensure that “none of the funds made available for a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure, including each deficient program, may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States.”³

The Act affirms, consistent with Executive Order 14005, *Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers* (“the Executive Order”), this Administration’s priority to “use terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards to maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States.”⁴

The Act provides statutory authorities for the Made in America Office (“MIAO”) in the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) to maximize and enforce compliance with Made in

¹ “Made in America Laws” means all statutes, regulations, rules, and Executive Orders relating to Federal financial assistance awards or Federal procurement, including those that refer to “Buy America” or “Buy American,” that require, or provide a preference for, the purchase or acquisition of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States, including iron, steel, and manufactured products offered in the United States. Made in America Laws include laws requiring domestic preference for maritime transport, including the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Pub. L. No. 66-261), also known as the Jones Act. Exec. Order No. 14,005, 86 Fed. Reg. 7475, § 2(b) (Jan. 28, 2021), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/28/2021-02038/ensuring-the-future-is-made-in-all-of-america-by-all-of-americas-workers>. Made in America Laws also include laws that give preference to Indian-owned and -controlled businesses, such as the Buy Indian Act (25 U.S.C. 47), that produce items in the United States.

² For the purposes of this guidance, the terms “Federal agency” and “agency” mean any authority of the United States that is an “agency” (as defined in section 3502 of title 44, United States Code), other than an independent regulatory agency (as defined in that section). IIJA, § 70912(3).

³ IIJA, § 70914(a).

⁴ Exec. Order No. 14,005 (see footnote 1).

America Laws.⁵ MIAO aims to increase reliance on domestic supply chains and reduce the need for waivers through a strategic process aimed at: achieving consistency across agencies; gathering data to support decision-making to make U.S. supply chains more resilient; bringing increased transparency to waivers in order to send clear demand signals to domestic producers; and concentrating efforts on changes that will have the greatest impact.⁶

This memorandum provides implementation guidance to Federal agencies on the application of: (1) a “Buy America” preference⁷ to Federal financial assistance programs for infrastructure; and (2) a transparent process to waive such a preference, when necessary. A Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure is any program under which an award may be issued for an infrastructure project, regardless of whether infrastructure is the primary purpose of the award. The term “project” means any activity related to the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States.⁸

Agencies should determine how this guidance is best applied to their infrastructure programs and processes, and consult with OMB, as needed, on establishing criteria, processes, and procedures for applying a Buy America preference and issuing waivers. OMB may update or provide additional guidance, as appropriate, to further assist agencies in the implementation of a Buy America preference.

I. Application of a Buy America Preference

By May 14, 2022, agencies must ensure that all applicable programs comply with section 70914 of the Act, including by the incorporation of a Buy America preference in the terms and conditions of each award with an infrastructure project.⁹ The Act requires the following Buy America preference:

- (1) All iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States. This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.
- (2) All manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation.

⁵ IJA, § 70923(a) & (b)(1).

⁶ OMB Memorandum M-21-26, Increasing Opportunities for Domestic Sourcing and Reducing the Need for Waivers from Made in America Laws available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/M-21-06.pdf>

⁷ For the purposes of this guidance, a “Buy America” preference is a domestic content procurement preference as defined in IJA, § 70912(2).

⁸ IJA, § 70912 (5) & (7).

⁹ See Appendix I: Example of Award Term - Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials.

- (3) All construction materials are manufactured in the United States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States.^{10, 11}

II. Applicability to Federal Financial Assistance Programs

This guidance applies to all Federal financial assistance as defined in section 200.1 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations¹²—whether or not funded through IJJA—where funds are appropriated or otherwise made available and used for a project for infrastructure. Federal financial assistance means assistance that non-Federal entities receive or administer in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, non-cash contributions or donations of property, direct assistance, loans, loan guarantees, and other types of financial assistance. The term “non-Federal entity” includes States, local governments, territories, Indian tribes, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), and nonprofit organizations.¹³

For purposes of this guidance, for-profit organizations are not considered non-Federal entities. However, this guidance does not alter independent statutory authorities that agencies may have to include domestic content requirements in awards of Federal financial assistance issued to for-profit organizations.

Federal agencies are encouraged to consult with OMB if they are uncertain about the applicability of this guidance to any particular infrastructure program.

Before applying a Buy America preference to a covered program that will affect Tribal communities, Federal agencies should follow the consultation policies established through Executive Order 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, and consistent with policies set forth in the Presidential Memorandum of January 26, 2021, on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-Nation Relationships. Federal agencies should commence consultation promptly.

This guidance does not apply to “expenditures for assistance authorized under section 402, 403, 404, 406, 408, or 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170a, 5170b, 5170c, 5172, 5174, or 5192) relating to a major disaster or emergency declared by the President under section 401 or 501, respectively, of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170, 5191) or pre and post disaster or emergency response expenditures.”¹⁴ “[P]re and post disaster or emergency response expenditures” consist of expenditures for financial assistance that are (1) authorized by statutes other than the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121 et seq., and (2) made in anticipation of or response to an event or events that qualify as an “emergency” or “major disaster” within the meaning of the Stafford Act, *id.* § 5122(1), (2). Awards made to support the construction or improvement of infrastructure to mitigate the damage that may be caused by a non-imminent future emergency or disaster, such as awards

¹⁰ IJJA, § 70912 (2) & (6)(B)(ii).

¹¹ See Section VIII. of this guidance for more information on construction materials.

¹² IJJA § 70912(4)(A)

¹³ See 2 C.F.R. § 200.1.

¹⁴ IJJA § 70912(4)(B)

made under FEMA’s Flood Mitigation Assistance program,¹⁵ do not qualify as “pre and post disaster or emergency response expenditures.”

Subawards should conform to the terms and conditions of the Federal award from which they flow.¹⁶

The IIJA’s definition of “infrastructure” encompasses public infrastructure projects. Thus, the term “infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property.¹⁷ Agencies should treat structures, facilities, and equipment that generate, transport, and distribute energy - including electric vehicle (EV) charging - as infrastructure.

When determining if a program has infrastructure expenditures, Federal agencies should interpret the term “infrastructure” broadly and consider the definition provided above as illustrative and not exhaustive. When determining if a particular construction project of a type not listed in the definition above constitutes “infrastructure,” agencies should consider whether the project will serve a public function, including whether the project is publicly owned and operated, privately operated on behalf of the public, or is a place of public accommodation, as opposed to a project that is privately owned and not open to the public. Projects with the former qualities have greater indicia of infrastructure, while projects with the latter quality have fewer. Projects consisting solely of the purchase, construction, or improvement of a private home for personal use, for example, would not constitute an infrastructure project. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to consult with OMB when making such determinations.

Agencies should consult with MIAO regarding their readiness to apply the requirements of the Act to covered programs. Agencies with questions regarding the application of a Buy America preference to agency-specific programs, including questions about the possible use of waivers during adjustment periods as agencies work to implement the Act, are advised to reach out to MIAO for technical assistance and advice.

III. Consistency with International Agreements

Pursuant to section 70914(e) of the Act, this guidance must be applied in a manner consistent with the obligations of the United States under international agreements.

IV. Avoid Unnecessary Disruption

The Act makes clear that its preferences apply to a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure only to the extent that a domestic content procurement preference as described

¹⁵ See 42 U.S.C. § 4104c.

¹⁶ 2 CFR 200.101 (b) (2)

¹⁷ IIJA, § 70912(5).