

OCA FILE LEG

31 October 1988
OCA 3626-88

MEMORANDUM FOR: Comptroller
Chief, Logistics & Procurement Law Division/OGC

FROM: [redacted] Legislation Division
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: Metric Usage Provision in Trade Bill

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1. Section 5164 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (attached) amends the Metric Conversion Act of 1975. In seeking to have the Federal Government take responsibility for developing procedures and techniques to assist industry in converting to the metric system of measurement, it requires each agency of the Federal Government to establish guidelines for using the metric system in its procurements, grants and other business-related activities unless impractical or likely to cause significant inefficiencies or loss of markets. The agency must then report on its actions to the Congress. More legislative recommendations may follow.

2. Should you have any questions, please telephone me on

[redacted]

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Attachment

OCA/LEG [redacted] 26126) 31 Oct 88

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II

Calendar No. 841

100TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4848

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 25, 1988

Received

JULY 26, 1988

Read twice and ordered placed on the calendar

AN ACT

To enhance the competitiveness of American industry, and for
other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Om-
5 nibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.

Sec. 2. Legislative history of H.R. 3 applicable.

TITLE I—TRADE, CUSTOMS, AND TARIFF LAWS

Sec. 1001. Findings and purposes.

1 (B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph
2 (5) and inserting in lieu thereof “; and”; and

3 (C) by adding at the end thereof the following
4 new paragraph:

5 “(6) maintain a permanent archival repository and
6 clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of
7 nonclassified scientific, technical, and engineering infor-
8 mation.”.

9 (d) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—There is established
10 within the Department of Commerce a Commerce, Science,
11 and Technology Fellowship Program with the stated purpose
12 of providing a select group of employees of the executive
13 branch of the Government with the opportunity of learning
14 how the legislative branch and other parts of the executive
15 branch function through work experiences of up to one year.
16 The Secretary of Commerce shall report to the Congress
17 within six months after the date of enactment of this Act on
18 the Department of Commerce’s plans for implementing such
19 Program by March 31, 1989.

20 SEC. 5164. METRIC USAGE.

21 (a) FINDINGS.—Section 2 of the Metric Conversion Act
22 of 1975 is amended by adding at the end thereof the follow-
23 ing new paragraphs:

24 “(3) World trade is increasingly geared towards
25 the metric system of measurement.

1 “(4) Industry in the United States is often at a
2 competitive disadvantage when dealing in international
3 markets because of its nonstandard measurement
4 system, and is sometimes excluded when it is unable to
5 deliver goods which are measured in metric terms.

6 “(5) The inherent simplicity of the metric system
7 of measurement and standardization of weights and
8 measures has led to major cost savings in certain in-
9 dustries which have converted to that system.

10 “(6) The Federal Government has a responsibility
11 to develop procedures and techniques to assist industry,
12 especially small business, as it voluntarily converts to
13 the metric system of measurement.

14 “(7) The metric system of measurement can pro-
15 vide substantial advantages to the Federal Government
16 in its own operations.”.

17 (b) POLICY.—Section 3 of the Metric Conversion Act of
18 1975 is amended to read as follows:

19 “SEC. 3. It is therefore the declared policy of the
20 United States—

21 “(1) to designate the metric system of measure-
22 ment as the preferred system of weights and measures
23 for United States trade and commerce;

24 “(2) to require that each Federal agency, by a
25 date certain and to the extent economically feasible by

1 the end of the fiscal year 1992, use the metric system
2 of measurement in its procurements, grants, and other
3 business-related activities, except to the extent that
4 such use is impractical or is likely to cause significant
5 inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms,
6 such as when foreign competitors are producing com-
7 peting products in non-metric units;

8 “(3) to seek out ways to increase understanding of
9 the metric system of measurement through educational
10 information and guidance and in Government publica-
11 tions; and

12 “(4) to permit the continued use of traditional sys-
13 tems of weights and measures in nonbusiness activi-
14 ties.”

15 (c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Metric Conversion Act of
16 1975 is further amended by redesignating section 12 as sec-
17 tion 13, and by inserting after section 11 the following new
18 section:

19 “SEC. 12. (a) As soon as possible after the date of the
20 enactment of this section, each agency of the Federal Gov-
21 ernment shall establish guidelines to carry out the policy set
22 forth in section 3 (with particular emphasis upon the policy
23 set forth in paragraph (2) of that section), and as part of its
24 annual budget submission for each fiscal year beginning after
25 such date shall report to the Congress on the actions which it

1 has taken during the previous fiscal year, as well as the ac-
2 tions which it plans for the fiscal year involved, to implement
3 fully the metric system of measurement in accordance with
4 that policy. Such reporting shall cease for an agency in the
5 fiscal year after it has fully implemented its efforts under sec-
6 tion 3(2). As used in this section, the term 'agency of the
7 Federal Government' means an Executive agency or military
8 department as those terms as defined in chapter 1 of title 5,
9 United States Code.

10 “(b) At the end of the fiscal year 1992, the Comptroller
11 General shall review the implementation of this Act, and
12 upon completion of such review shall report his findings to
13 the Congress along with any legislative recommendations he
14 may have.”.

15 **PART II—SYMMETRICAL ACCESS TO**
16 **TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

17 **SEC. 5171. SYMMETRICAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGICAL RE-**
18 **SEARCH.**

19 (a) Section 502 of the Foreign Relations Authorization
20 Act, Fiscal Year 1979 (22 U.S.C. 2656b) is amended by
21 adding at the end the following new paragraph:

22 “(5) Federally supported international science and
23 technology agreements should be negotiated to ensure
24 that—