



VISION ZERO
zero deaths
zero serious injuries

Montana Department of Transportation

2701 Prospect
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

Michael T. Tooley, Director

Steve Bullock, Governor

Date: November 22, 2017

Subject: **Request for Proposals**
Agricultural Loads on MT Bridges
UPN 2375

To Whom It May Concern:

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is accepting proposals from consulting firms interested in performing research, analysis, and development of recommendations for the subject project. One firm will be selected to perform the work specified herein.

Teams may be established as necessary; however, it is expected that the prime consultant will be capable of completing the vast majority of the work, and the proposal must clearly identify the prime for this contract. As a rule, the prime consultant must complete at least 50% of the work for a specific project or assignment unless written exception is given.

Montana professional engineering licensure is required for this work, and must be in-hand at the time your proposal is submitted. If this requirement is not met and clearly identified in the proposal, your proposal will be considered non-responsive.

If your firm is interested, please submit a proposal as described herein.

BACKGROUND

Most vehicles in the state of Montana must comply with the national weight restrictions for motor vehicles as stated in the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 23, Chapter I, Subchapter G, Part 658, Section 658.17), and as reiterated in Montana law according to Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 61-10-107. Montana state law however; also contains an exception to the federal weight limit for agricultural vehicles under certain circumstances. This exception allows for a 20% exceedance over the federally mandated maximum allowable loads. As given in MCA 61-10-144, this exemption states:

“Farm vehicles transporting agricultural products from a harvesting combine or other harvesting machinery may be operated on any highway, except a highway that is part of the federal-aid interstate system, within a 100-mile radius of the harvested field to the point of first unloading without incurring excess weight penalties under 61-10-145 if the total gross weight of the farm vehicle or combination of vehicles does not exceed allowable weight limitations by more than 20% for each axle and the maximum load for each inch of tire width does not exceed 670 pounds. A single trip permit, as required in subsection (2), is not applicable to the farm vehicle or combination of vehicles.” (*Montana Code Annotated 61-10-144*)

The Montana Department of Transportation is seeking assistance from a qualified firm to help gather and analyze available information regarding the actual loads being placed on Montana bridges from agricultural vehicles throughout the state. This research and analysis will identify what proportion of agricultural vehicles are utilizing this exemption, and to what extent they are approaching the 20% overage limit. This information will then be used to help determine appropriate loads and load factors to be used in bridge design, load rating, and load posting bridges across the state of Montana.

SCOPE OF WORK

Research Phase

The offeror will utilize available Weigh-In-Motion (WIM) scale data provided by the Montana Department of Transportation. The firm selected will also collect any additional data as needed to determine commodity specific loads. For example, the full/empty truck weight records from agricultural commodity handling facilities, for items such as wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, and timber trucks could be utilized. The offeror will perform an initial review of the data available and determine if additional information will be required. If additional information is needed the firm selected will coordinate with MDT to collect such data as is required through independent means or in conjunction with the MDT Motor Carrier Services department.

Offeror will also perform research and collect information regarding agricultural vehicle configurations commonly used to transport the various agricultural products in the state. This research will establish or provide at a minimum the following information:

- What types of agricultural products (i.e. beets, potatoes, wheat, corn, hay, timber, etc.) are producing the heaviest overweight loads, and what parts of the state each commodity is most frequently produced.
- What vehicle configurations (axle loads, axle spacings, wheel spacings, semi-trailer vs. single unit, etc.) are being utilized across the state.
- Whether certain configurations of vehicles are used only for certain agricultural products.
- What parts of the state (if any) are most affected by overweight agricultural vehicle operations.
- Data sufficient to determine through a statistical analysis the range of weights, configurations, commodities being transported, and the actual range of loads experienced which fall under the agricultural exemption of up to 20% overload for Montana bridges.

Statistical Analysis Phase

The offeror will perform a statistical analysis of the research data collected. This analysis will utilize appropriate confidence intervals to establish recommended design and load rating loads and load factors to be used on Montana bridges. The analysis will determine whether the full 20% overload is actually being applied to MT bridges. The analysis will investigate whether a lesser load or a reduced set of load factors could justifiably be utilized when designing and analyzing bridges for agricultural overload in the state of Montana. The analysis will provide sound statistical reasoning for the load configurations recommended, load factors recommended for use in design, load rating, and load posting.

Recommendations & Reporting Phase

Offeror will provide a written report which includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- The most common types of agricultural vehicles being used in the state, as defined by the FHWA vehicle classification scheme F.
- Provide a recommendation of Montana specific overweight agricultural truck loads to be used for bridge design and load rating purposes. It is expected that 2 load configurations (or up to 3 depending on the uniqueness of the actual loads and truck configurations) will be recommended.
- Provide charts or other graphical representation of the data collected and describe how the recommendations fit into that.
- Provide a map showing the frequency of the overweight agricultural vehicles that could be used to identify areas of concern for bridge inspection purposes.
- Provide additional consultation and recommendations to MDT Bridge Bureau regarding updating MDT's bridge load posting policy based on the statistical analysis performed.

LOCATION

Statewide

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND DELIVERABLES

The project schedule will be developed and negotiated prior to executing the contract agreement. At this time, it is anticipated that deliverables will generally consist of those items as described in the Scope of Work section.

STANDARDS, SPECIFICATIONS, AND POLICIES

Work is expected to follow MDT's various Manuals, Guides, and Policies. These items may be found on MDT's Design Consulting web page at: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/consulting/>.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Submit four (4) copies of the proposal. The correct number of proposals must be submitted in order for your firm to be considered. Clearly label each proposal with the project name identified in the subject line of this RFP. All proposals must be submitted in hard copy format; electronic proposals will not be considered.

The Department must receive the proposals for this RFP no later than 3:00 PM MST, December 19, 2017. Send the proposals to:

Ryan Dahlke, P.E.
Consultant Design Engineer
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Regardless of cause, late proposals will not be accepted and will automatically be disqualified from further consideration. It shall be solely the vendor's responsibility to assure delivery at the specified office by the specified time. Offeror may request the State return late proposals at vendor's expense or the State will dispose of late proposals if requested by the offeror. (See Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 2.5.509.). If no request is made, late proposals become the property of the Department. All proposals submitted on time become the property of the Department.

The costs for developing and delivering responses to this solicitation are entirely the responsibility of the offeror. The State is not liable for any expense incurred by the offeror in the preparation and presentation of this submittal.

TENTATIVE RFP/SELECTION SCHEDULE

The anticipated schedule for consultant solicitation and selection for this contract is as follows (subject to change):

November 22, 2017: RFP released
December 19, 2017: Proposals due to be submitted to MDT Consultant Design
January 5, 2018: Proposals reviewed, rated, and ranked by the evaluation committee
January 10, 2018: Consultant Selection Board meeting to select consultant

There are three (3) members on the evaluation committee for this RFP:

1. MDT Bridge Bureau Manager
2. MDT Bridge Bureau Structural Engineer
3. MDT Bridge Bureau Structural Engineer

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The proposal must contain the information listed in this section. The proposal is **limited to ten (10) pages**, not including the required Unbound Cover Page, Appendix A, or Unbound References attachment. A single cover jacket/title page is allowed if desired, and will not count in the page limit. Each page is defined as one side of a letter size sheet (no larger than 8 ½” x 11”), minimum font size of 10. Evaluation of information will begin with the first page immediately following the cover jacket/title page, and every page will be counted, in order, from that point forward, including any table of contents or divider pages the firm wishes to include. Once the page limit is reached, any information included thereafter will be removed and not considered or scored. Please organize your proposal in the same order and numbering format as shown below, which will assist MDT in reviewing your proposal:

Unbound Cover Page (1 page)

Include an UNBOUND version of MDT’s standard cover page form, available at the following location:

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/cdb/MDT_CDB_002_Proposal_SOQ_Cover_Sheet.pdf

Information presented in the cover page will not be considered in proposal scoring.

Questions

- 1) **Qualifications of Firm:** Provide a discussion of how your firm is best qualified to respond to the requirements of this project. Discussion should focus on the requirements for this specific project, particularly:
 - Your firm’s expertise and experience, as it relates to the work described in the “Scope of Work” section above. Provide examples of previous related experience as it relates to these services.
 - A thorough comprehension of the methods of statistical modeling and analysis that this project will require.

- A thorough comprehension of LRFD bridge design, and LRFR bridge load rating methodology, and how statistical analysis is used to determine LRFD, and LRFR factors.
- Ability, Strategy, and Approach to meet project/contract requirements, as described in the “Scope of Work” section above.
- Ability and Strategy to meet project schedules, including fast-tracked or emergency projects, and changing priorities. Response should include a brief discussion on current and projected workload.
- Compatibility of systems, software, and equipment (i.e. CADD software, word processing software, etc.), and experience with these systems, software, and equipment. The Department’s standard design software is Microstation GEOPAK SS4 with OpenRoads Technology. Please note that MDT is not currently prepared to allow use of Bentley OpenRoads Designer CONNECT edition. Describe any additional support equipment or software you intend to use.
- Subcontractors and support services that you anticipate utilizing and describe their expertise.
- Quality assurance/quality control procedures.

2) **Qualifications of Personnel:** Provide a discussion of the qualifications of the key personnel to be assigned to this project. Discussion should focus on the requirements for this specific project, particularly:

- Expertise, experience, and training of key personnel to be assigned to the project, as it relates to the “Scope of Work” for this project. Provide examples of previous related experience as it relates to these services.
- Clearly state any professional licensing requirements applicable to this contract.
- Include an organization chart that indicates the project staff, their area of expertise, registration, and office location(s).

Resumes may be considered as supplemental information for scoring this question.

Appendix A

Resumes

Include brief resumes for the key personnel to be assigned to the contract.

Resumes are limited to one (1) page per person.

Unbound attachment

References

Submit ONE UNBOUND COPY of references that includes a minimum of five (5) separate contracts from the past three (3) years. If applicable, you may submit multiple contracts for a single client. Each contract must pertain to work similar to the proposed scope of services. Include client name, a currently employed primary contact person, an alternative contact person, corresponding valid phone numbers and emails for both contacts, a range of contract value, and a brief description of the work performed. If MDT needs to use these references for the Past

Performance Score (as described in the “Evaluation of Proposals” section below), and is unable to contact the required number of references after a reasonable effort, the firm will receive a zero for the missing reference(s).

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following factors:

- 1) Qualifications of Firm (50 points possible)**
- 2) Qualifications of Personnel (50 points possible)**
- 3) Record of past performance (30 points possible)**
 - a) If two (2) or more MDT evaluations specific to the discipline for this contract are available for the consultant, the average score of these evaluations will be used.
 - b) If fewer than two (2) MDT evaluations specific to the discipline for this contract are available for the consultant, but there are two (2) or more MDT evaluations are available for other work disciplines, the consultant’s current overall past performance score from MDT evaluations will be used.
 - c) If there is only one (1) MDT evaluation available for the consultant, the record of past performance score will be an average of the MDT evaluation and one (1) reference check from the references provided in the unbound attachment.
 - d) If no MDT evaluations are available, the average score of two (2) reference checks from the references provided in the unbound attachment will be used for this score.

Regardless of partnership/teaming relationships, the past performance of the prime consultant will be the past performance scored that will be used for this score.

All Proposals will be evaluated using the following basic scoring methodology:

- Outstanding/Exceptional response: 90-100% of the available points
- Good response: 70-90% of the available points
- Average response: 50-70% of the available points
- Poor response: 30-50% of the available points
- Qualifications not clearly met: 0-30% of the available points

Following the review, evaluation, and rating of all proposals, the final results will be presented to the Consultant Selection Board at the MDT Headquarters Building. At this time, the Consultant Selection Board will select the most qualified firm(s) to perform the work. In the event that a firm cannot be identified as the most qualified through an evaluation of these proposals, MDT reserves the right to narrow down the list of responding firms to an appropriate short list. Short-listed firms will either be asked to provide a supplemental proposal, or asked to be interviewed or provide a presentation. Scores from the proposals, supplement project proposals (if used), and interviews (if used) will be carried forward to determine final consultant score. Consultant selection is finalized by MDT at the Consultant Selection Board meeting.

INDIRECT COST RATE REQUIREMENTS

Proof of the firm's Indirect Cost Rate (overhead rate) is *not required* with this proposal submittal. However, an Indirect Cost Rate may be required prior to executing a contract according to MDT's Indirect Cost Rate Requirements:

All submitted indirect cost rates must be calculated in accordance with 23 CFR 172 for the cost principles of 48 CFR part 31 and include the required items identified in the MDT Indirect Cost Rate Policy located in Appendix A of the Consultant Services Manual on the MDT Internet website.

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/cdb/consultant_manual/consultant-design-manual_combined.pdf

Do not show any actual numerical financial information such as the overhead rate or personnel rates within your proposal. Specific cost information of the firm or team should not be part of the proposal.

AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Contract agreements will generally be administered on a cost plus fixed fee basis. The contracts will have negotiated cost ceilings. If a consulting firm is selected for a specific project and a contract agreement is successfully negotiated, certain financial information will be required as part of the contract agreement. As described in the Indirect Cost Rate Requirements section above, all Consultants and subconsultants must provide the Department with an Indirect Cost Rate (as applicable) audited (when applicable) in accordance with 23 CFR 172 for the cost principles of 48 CFR Part 31 and based on the firm's latest completed fiscal year's costs. Personnel rates, profit, and direct expenses must be clearly outlined and provided to the Department. The standard MDT agreement can be found at the following address:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/cdb/forms/pdf/std-agreement-shell.pdf>

Do not submit actual numerical financial information within this proposal.

STATE OPTION TO AWARD

While the State has every intention to award a contract resulting from this RFP, issuance of the RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award and execute a contract. Upon a determination such actions would be in its best interest, the State, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to:

- Cancel or terminate this RFP (18-4-307, MCA);
- Reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP (ARM 2.5.602);
- Waive any undesirable, inconsequential, or inconsistent provisions of this RFP that would not have significant impact on any proposal (ARM 2.5.505);

- Not award a contract, if it is in the State's best interest not to proceed with contract execution (ARM 2.5.602); or
- If awarded, terminate any contract if the State determines adequate funds are not available (18-4-313, MCA).

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

From the date this solicitation is issued until the consultant selection is finalized by MDT at the Consultant Selection Board meeting, offerors are not allowed to communicate with any state staff or officials regarding this solicitation, except at the direction of the Consultant Design Engineer. If unauthorized contact is made and the Consultant Design Engineer determines the context of the contact gives the firm an unfair advantage, the firm will be disqualified from the solicitation. Contact information for the single point of contact is as follows:

Ryan Dahlke
Consultant Design Engineer
Montana Department of Transportation
(406) 444-7292 (Direct Line)
(800) 335-7592 (TTY)
rdahlke@mt.gov

DBE/WBE GOALS

There are no DBE/WBE goals for this work, but firms are strongly encouraged to utilize DBE firms if applicable. A Montana certified DBE list is available and can be found on the MDT web page, <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/dbe.shtml>.

NONDISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE

Consultants will be subject to Federal and Montana nondiscrimination laws and regulations (see attached notice).

If you have any questions, please contact me at (406) 444-7292 or (406) 444-7696 TDD, or by email at rdahlke@mt.gov. I look forward to receiving your proposal.

Sincerely,

Ryan Dahlke, P.E.
Consultant Design Engineer

Attachment

copies:

Jay Skoog, ACEC Executive Director-Montana Chapter
MDT Consultant Design Bureau file

e-copies:

Dwane Kailey, MDT Chief Engineer
Dustin Rouse, MDT Preconstruction Engineer
Lesly Tribelhorn, MDT Highways Engineer

Patricia Schwinden, MDT Civil Rights Bureau Chief
Lynn Zanto, MDT Planning Division Administrator
Kent Barnes, MDT Bridge Engineer

**MDT NONDISCRIMINATION
AND
DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION NOTICE**

Montana Department of Transportation (“MDT”) is committed to conducting all of its business in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. In accordance with State and Federal law MDT prohibits any and all discrimination and protections are all inclusive (hereafter “protected classes”) by its employees or anyone with whom MDT does business:

Federal protected classes

Race, color, national origin,
sex, sexual orientation, gender identity,
age, disability, & Limited English Proficiency

State protected classes

Race, color, national origin, parental/marital status
pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions
related to pregnancy or childbirth, religion/
creed, social origin or condition, genetic
information, sex, sexual orientation, gender
identification or expression, national origin,
ancestry, age, disability mental or physical, political
or religious affiliations or ideas, military service or
veteran status

For the duration of this contract/agreement, the PARTY agrees as follows:

(1) Compliance with Regulations: The PARTY (hereinafter includes consultant) will comply with all Acts and Regulations of the United States and the State of Montana relative to Non-Discrimination in Federally and State-assisted programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the State of Montana, as they may be amended from time to time, which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this contract.

(2) Non-discrimination:

- a. The PARTY, with regard to the work performed by it during the contract, will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of any of the protected classes in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment, employment, and all other activities being performed under this contract/agreement.
- b. PARTY will provide notice to its employees and the members of the public that it serves that will include the following:
 - i. Statement that PARTY does not discriminate on the grounds of any protected classes.
 - ii. Statement that PARTY will provide employees and members of the public that it serves with reasonable accommodations for any known disability, upon request, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADA).
 - iii. Contact information for PARTY’s representative tasked with handling non-discrimination complaints and providing reasonable accommodations under the ADA.

- iv. Information on how to request information in alternative accessible formats.
- c. In accordance with Mont. Code Ann. § 49-3-207, PARTY will include a provision, in all of its hiring/subcontracting notices, that all hiring/subcontracting will be on the basis of merit and qualifications and that PARTY does not discriminate on the grounds of any protected class.

(3) Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs):

- a. If the PARTY receives federal financial assistance as part of this contract/agreement, the PARTY will make all reasonable efforts to utilize DBE firms certified by MDT for its subcontracting services. The list of all currently certified DBE firms is located on the MDT website at mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/dbe.shtml
- b. By signing this agreement the PARTY assures that:

The contractor, sub recipient or subcontractor shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the performance of this contract. The contractor shall carry out applicable requirements of 49 CFR part 26 in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts. Failure by the contractor to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this contract, which may result in the termination of this contract or such other remedy as the recipient deems appropriate.

- c. PARTY must include the above assurance in each contract/agreement the PARTY enters.

(4) Solicitation for Subcontracts, Including Procurement of Materials and Equipment: In all solicitations, either by competitive bidding, or negotiation, made by the PARTY for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials, or leases of equipment, each potential subcontractor or supplier will be notified by the PARTY of the PARTY's obligation under this contract/agreement and all Acts and Regulations of the United States and the State of Montana related to Non-Discrimination.

(5) Information and Reports: The PARTY will provide all information and reports required by the Acts, Regulations, and directives issued pursuant thereto and will permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information and its facilities as may be determined by MDT or relevant US DOT Administration to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Acts, Regulations, and instructions. Where any information required of a contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish the information, the PARTY will so certify to MDT or relevant US DOT Administration, as appropriate, and will set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

(6) Sanctions for Noncompliance: In the event of a PARTY's noncompliance with the Non-discrimination provisions of this contract/agreement, MDT will impose such sanctions as it or the relevant US DOT Administration may determine to be appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- a. Withholding payments to the PARTY under the contract/agreement until the PARTY complies; and/or
- b. Cancelling, terminating, or suspending the contract/agreement, in whole or in part.

(7) Pertinent Non-Discrimination Authorities:

During the performance of this contract/agreement, the PARTY, for itself, its assignees, and successor in interest, agrees to comply with the following non-discrimination statues and authorities; including but not limited to:

Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.*, 78 stat. 252), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin); and 49 CFR Part 21;
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, (42 U.S.C. § 4601), (prohibits unfair treatment of persons displaced or whose property has been acquired because of Federal or Federal-aid programs and projects);
- Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, (23 U.S.C. § 324 *et seq.*), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex);
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (29 U.S.C. § 794 *et seq.*), as amended, (prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability); and 49 CFR Part 27;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, (42 U.S.C. § 6101 *et seq.*), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of age);
- Airport and Airways Improvement Act of 1982, (49 U.S.C. § 471, Section 47123), as amended, (prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, or sex);
- The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, (PL 100-209), (broadened the scope, coverage, and applicability of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, by expanding the definition of the terms “programs or activities” to include all of the programs or activities of the Federal-aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors, whether such programs or activities are Federally funded or not);
- Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the operation of public entities, public and private transportation systems, places of public accommodation, and certain testing entities (42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12189) as implemented by Department of Transportation regulations at 49 CFR parts 37 and 38;
- The Federal Aviation Administration’s Non-Discrimination statute (49 U.S.C. § 47123) (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, and sex);
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, which prevents discrimination against minority populations by discouraging programs, policies, and activities with disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;

- Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and resulting agency guidance, national origin discrimination includes discrimination because of Limited English Proficiency (LEP). To ensure compliance with Title VI, you must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to your programs (70 Fed. Reg. at 74087 to 74100);
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits you from discriminating because of sex in education programs or activities (20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq.*).
- Executive Order 13672 prohibits discrimination in the civilian federal workforce on the basis of gender identity and in hiring by federal contractors on the basis of both sexual orientation and gender identity.

State

- Mont. Code Ann. § 49-3-205 Governmental services;
- Mont. Code Ann. § 49-3-206 Distribution of governmental funds;
- Mont. Code Ann. § 49-3-207 Nondiscrimination provision in all public contracts.

(8) Incorporation of Provisions: The PARTY will include the provisions of paragraph one through seven in every subcontract, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the Acts, the Regulations and/or directives issued pursuant thereto. The PARTY will take action with respect to any subcontract or procurement as MDT or the relevant US DOT Administration may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance. Provided, that if the PARTY becomes involved in, or is threatened with litigation by a subcontractor, or supplier because of such direction, the PARTY may request MDT to enter into any litigation to protect the interests of MDT. In addition, the PARTY may request the United States to enter into the litigation to protect the interests of the United States.