



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

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JUL 9 1981

The Honorable Gerald P. Carmen
Administrator of General Services

Dear Mr. Carmen:

In a letter dated April 30, 1981, Mr. Ray Kline, Acting Administrator, General Services Administration (GSA), requested, in accordance with our circular letter dated August 20, 1979, an exemption from our regulations contained in 4 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) § 52.3(a) (1980), which restricts the use of travel agents to procure official Government travel. GSA submitted a proposal which would allow it, in its discretion, to establish, within a 2-year period, one or more commercial travel agent contractual operations in each of the 11 GSA regions. Where feasible, GSA plans to operate regional travel centers designed to serve a group of Federal agencies.

Based on our review, we believe the proposal complies generally with the requirements set forth in the circular letter. We also note that this Office has recommended and supported the concept of centralizing travel services for the various Federal agencies in one region in the past. See, 39 Comp. Gen. 554 (1960); "Use of Discount Airline Fares and Teleticketing Would Help Save on Government Travel Expenses," FGMSD 78-46, July 21, 1978. Therefore, an exemption from our regulations in 4 C.F.R. § 52.3(a) for 2 years is authorized so that you may test the use of travel agents.

You submitted your plan for the Denver Federal Center complex with your request. During the test period, we request that you advise as to where you will establish other tests and provide us with the basic test plan, so that we can avoid duplication in considering exemptions to agencies in regions in which you are testing the use of travel agents.

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We look forward to the results of your test of the use of travel agents and of your efforts to centralize travel services for the Federal regional offices.

Sincerely yours,

MILTON J. SOCOLAR

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States