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Proposed GSA Rule—New Policy on .gov Domain Names

On Thursday, May 16, 2002, the General Services Administration (GSA) issued a Proposed Rule in the Federal Register that would expand the naming conventions available to states as well as expand the availability of the .gov domain to local governmental organizations.¹ Currently, the .gov registration website indicates that states are eligible to register their full names (for example, pennsylvania.gov) or their postal codes (pa.gov).² The Proposed Rule would expand the names that states can register to names that incorporate the full state name or postal code, such as pennsylvaniaparks.gov or paparks.gov.

The following are highlights of GSA's Proposed Rule that may impact the states. *Please note that GSA is accepting comments on the Proposed Rule until July 15, 2002.*

- **Availability:** The .gov domain is available to federal, state and local governments as well as Native Sovereign Nations (NSNs).
- **Authorization:** GSA's general policy is that domain names must be authorized by the CIO of the organization requesting a domain name. For states, the Office of the Governor or the "highest ranking Information Technology (IT) official" can authorize a request for registration of a .gov domain name. CIOs can delegate this authority as long as GSA is notified of the delegation.
- **Registration Fees:** GSA proposes to charge a one-time set-up fee of \$250 to \$1,000, depending upon the level of assistance provided by GSA, and a recurring annual fee of \$100 to \$500. GSA calculated the fees based on its anticipated registration costs. The fees are intended to be consistent with industry charges.
- **State Naming Conventions:** For second-level registration, states "must register the full State name or clearly indicate the State postal code within the name." However, the state postal code cannot be imbedded within a word that obscures the state postal code. Examples of acceptable domain names include: virginia.gov; tennesseeanytime.gov; wa.gov; nmparks.gov; mysc.gov; emaryland.gov; ne-taxes.gov.
- **Conflicting Domain Names:** For potential conflicts between an existing domain name and a state postal code (for example, va.gov), states should register the full state name.
- **Number of Names a State Can Register:** Unlimited.
- **Registration of Local Governments and State Government Departments and Programs:** GSA is encouraging states "to make second-level domains available for third-level registration by local governments and state government departments and programs." States can develop their own policy scheme for the registration of local governments. However,

¹ View GSA's new Proposed Rule at: <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-12127-filed.pdf>.

² View the current state eligibility policy for .gov domain names at: <<http://www.nic.gov/help.html#21>>.

note that local governments are free to register domain names at the second level (please see the Proposed Rule for acceptable naming conventions). For states that are making third-level registration available, local governments are encouraged to register at the third level.

- **The Registration Process**: States can register at <http://nic.gov>. Registration can take between 48 hours and 30 days, depending on the accuracy of the submitted information and the length of time needed to secure CIO approval.