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Importers and Exporters May Obtain Confidential Treatment for Certain Manifest Information

Customs and Border Protection (“Customs”) recently reminded importers and exporters of the availability of confidential treatment of certain inward and outward vessel manifest information under Customs Regulations (19 CFR 103.31). Manifests apply to freight and identify the names and addresses of the shipper/consignee, the type of goods shipped, the gross weights, and the containers used in the shipment. Generally, this information is available to the press and the public.

The Journal of Commerce and certain trade organizations compile this information in databases and then disseminate it to the public for a fee. When confidential certification is obtained, certain manifest information may be examined and copied by the press, but it *may not* be published and may never be included on Automated Manifest System (AMS) data that is sold to the public. When certification for confidential treatment for inward or outward manifests is obtained, Customs withholds from the press and public the names and addresses of the importer and the shipper/consignee, as well as identifying marks and numbers found on vessel manifests.

Confidential treatment is granted for a two-year period, at which time the requestor must renew its application. The renewal certifications must be submitted to the Customs Disclosure Law Office at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the current certification.

For Additional Information

For additional information about certification for confidential treatment of certain inward and outward vessel manifest information, contact one of the Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP Customs and International Trade attorneys or professionals listed below.

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CIRCULAR 230 DISCLOSURE: Pursuant to Regulations governing practice before the Internal Revenue Service, any tax advice contained herein is not intended or written to be used and cannot be used by a taxpayer for the purpose of avoiding tax penalties that may be imposed on the taxpayer.

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