Circular No. 14/95-Cus.
dated 22/2/95

F.No. 411/4/93-CUS. III

Government of India
Ministry of Revenue, New Delhi
Department of Revenue, New Delhi

Subject : Constitution of a Watch Dog Panel at Customs Houses - Regarding

I am directed to draw your attention to the recommendation of the Committee on Indirect Taxes (Rekhi Committee) the "Watch Dog Panels" comprising of officers of the Customs Houses, Trade representatives and Clearing Agents Should be set up in all Customs Houses as these Panels would contribute positively to solving day to day operational problems and procedural difficulties of importers and exporters. This recommendation has since been examined by the Board in consultation with the Collectors of Customs.

2. The Board has observed that Public Grievance Committees are operating in the Customs Houses and these committees meet periodically, say every 2 or 3 months, wherein various issues relating to customs clearance procedures and functioning are taken up for redressal. This Committee is also involved with recommendations on policy matters. These Committees are necessary for dealing with general problems. However, as observed, the meeting of these committees are at fixed intervals and in this context Board has observed the necessity of another forum which may deal with day to day operational and provide for immediate remedy which is the requirement.

3. In view of the aforesaid facts, I am directed to say that the Board has accepted the recommendation of the Committee on Indirect taxes and decided that Watch Dog Panel may be constituted in each of the major Customs Houses. The Watch Dog Panels shall comprise representatives of the importers and exporters Associations, Customs House Association and the Collector of Customs. Where there are two collectors functioning in a Customs House, one collector would head the Panel relating to Imports and other Collector would head the Panel relating to Exports including Imports under Advance Licencing Schemes. Accordingly nominations for the Panel may be made from the trade. The Panel should meet at least once in 2 days. The Panel would be concerned with resolving day to day problems relating to Customs functioning which Effect the importers and exporters. The Panel shall continue alongside the Public Grievance Committee. A suitable Public Notice/Trade Notice may be issued.

4. It is requested that the Board's decision may be implemented with immediate effect and a report on the working of the Panel and its effectiveness in resolving the problems of the Trade may be informed to the Board on quarterly basis.

Sd/-
(S.M. Bhatnagar)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India