



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

C. Mehody
PL2

Decision

Matter of: Simpson Electric Company

File: R-223482

Date: July 3, 1986

DIGEST

1. General Accounting Office (GAO) will not review protest that a contracting agency in effect should limit competition by using more restrictive specifications. The objective of GAO's bid protest function is to ensure that the statutory requirements for full and open competition are met.
2. Specifications are not unduly restrictive where the contracting agency presents a reasonable explanation of why the specifications are necessary to meet its minimum needs and the protester fails to show that the restrictions are unreasonable.

DECISION

Simpson Electric Company protests the Army's decision to relax the specification for the AN/PSM-45 Digital Multimeter in connection with solicitation No. DAAB07-86-R-N059. We dismiss the protest.

In a letter dated April 17, 1986 to the contracting officer, Simpson described various revisions made by the Army which in Simpson's view improperly relaxed the existing specification for the item being procured. By letter dated June 11, the contracting officer confirmed that the Army had decided to relax several features of the original specification based on field use of the item showing that the more stringent features in the original specification exceeded the Army's minimum needs. The contracting officer also noted that several of the features described by Simpson as having been relaxed in fact were not part of the original specification, although they apparently were features of the product Simpson itself offered under the original specification.

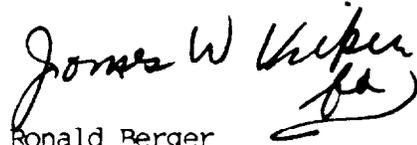
The protester's contention that the Army should use a more restrictive specification is not an issue that we will consider under our bid protest function. Contracting agencies are required to develop specifications permitting full and open competition to the extent consistent with the agency's actual needs. 10 U.S.C. § 2305(a)(1) (Supp. II 1984); DSP Technology, Inc., B-220593, Jan. 28, 1986, 86-1 CPD ¶ 96. The objective of our bid protest function is to ensure that the statutory requirements

035942

for full and open competition are met. We generally do not review protests that a contracting agency in effect should limit competition by using more restrictive specifications. DSP Technology, Inc., B-220593, supra; Olson and Associates Engineering, Inc., B-215742, July 30, 1984, 84-2 CPD ¶ 129.

In its letter to the contracting officer, Simpson also stated that the Army had revised the specification to require a narrower unit than called for in the original specification. Simpson contended that the revision was arbitrary and resulted in excluding its product from the competition. The contracting officer replied that the dimensions were revised based on field experience that indicated previously acquired multimeters were too wide to be conveniently used as handheld units. Simpson has offered no explanation as to why the contracting officer's determination of the Army's minimum needs, on which the revision was based, was unreasonable. Accordingly, we find no merit to Simpson's argument that the revision of the dimensions was improper. See DSP Technology, Inc., B-220593, supra.

The protest is dismissed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James W. Kiper" with a flourish underneath.

Ronald Berger
Deputy Associate
General Counsel