



Comptroller General  
of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

**Matter Of:** Preventive Maintenance Services Company

**File No.:** B-259828

**Date:** January 5, 1995

### DECISION

Preventive Maintenance Services Company protests award of a contract to Del-Jen, Inc. by the Department of the Navy under invitation for bid (IFB) No. N68711-94-B-0083. Preventive contends that Del-Jen's bid prices are significantly lower than the previous contractor's, who could not perform the contract, and those of the other bidders. Because the prices of Del-Jen's bid are so low, Preventive states that the bid is mathematically and materially unbalanced and should have been rejected.

Before a bid can be rejected as unbalanced, it must be found both mathematically and materially unbalanced. A bid is mathematically unbalanced where it is based on nominal prices for some of the items and overstated prices for other items. Thus, in order to prove that a bid is mathematically unbalanced, the protester must offer evidence that the bid contains both understated and overstated prices. OMSERV Corp., B-237691, Mar. 13, 1990, 90-1 CPD ¶ 271. As Preventive does not allege that the bid contains any overstated prices, its assertion that the bid is unbalanced is without merit. See GAL Inc., B-241465, Oct. 15, 1990, 90-2 CPD ¶ 292.

Moreover, the submission of very low or even below-cost prices is not a legal basis for rejecting the bid. A challenge of a vendor's low prices is essentially a challenge to the vendor's responsibility, that is, its ability to perform, which is a matter our Office generally does not review. *Id.*

The protest is dismissed.

*Ronald Berger*

Ronald Berger  
Associate General Counsel