

Section 7 AIA: Patent Trial and Appeal Board

(a) COMPOSITION AND DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 6 of title 35, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 6. Patent Trial and Appeal Board

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There shall be in the Office a Patent Trial and Appeal Board. The Director, the Deputy Director, the Commissioner for Patents, the Commissioner for Trademarks, and the administrative patent judges shall constitute the Patent Trial and Appeal Board. The administrative patent judges shall be persons of competent legal knowledge and scientific ability who are appointed by the Secretary, in consultation with the Director. Any reference in any Federal law, Executive order, rule, regulation, or delegation of authority, or any document of or pertaining to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences is deemed to refer to the Patent Trial and Appeal Board.

“(b) DUTIES.—The Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall—

“(1) on written appeal of an applicant, review adverse decisions of examiners upon applications for patents pursuant to section 134(a);

“(2) review appeals of reexaminations pursuant to section 134(b);

“(3) conduct derivation proceedings pursuant to section 135; and

“(4) conduct inter partes reviews and post-grant reviews pursuant to chapters 31 and 32.

“(c) 3-MEMBER PANELS.—Each appeal, derivation proceeding, post-grant review, and inter partes review shall be heard by at least 3 members of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board, who shall be designated by the Director. Only the Patent Trial and Appeal Board may grant rehearings.

“(d) TREATMENT OF PRIOR APPOINTMENTS.—The Secretary of Commerce may, in the Secretary’s discretion, deem the appointment of an administrative patent judge who, before the date of the enactment of this subsection, held office pursuant to an appointment by the Director to take effect on the date on which the Director initially appointed the administrative patent judge. It shall be a defense to a challenge to the appointment of an administrative patent judge on the basis of the judge’s having been originally appointed by the Director that the administrative patent judge so appointed was acting as a de facto officer.”

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 6 in the table of sections for chapter 1 of title 35, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS.—Section 134 of title 35, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “any reexamination proceeding” and inserting “a reexamination”; and

(2) by striking subsection (c).

(c) CIRCUIT APPEALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 141 of title 35, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 141. Appeal to Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

“(a) EXAMINATIONS.—An applicant who is dissatisfied with the final decision in an appeal to the Patent Trial and Appeal Board under section 134(a) may appeal the Board’s decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. By filing such an appeal, the applicant waives his or her right to proceed under section 145.

“(b) REEXAMINATIONS.—A patent owner who is dissatisfied with the final decision in an appeal of a reexamination to the Patent Trial and Appeal Board under section 134(b) may appeal the Board’s decision only to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

“(c) POST-GRANT AND INTER PARTES REVIEWS.—A party to an inter partes review or a post-grant review who is dissatisfied with the final written decision of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board under section 318(a) or 328(a) (as the case may be) may appeal the Board’s decision only to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

“(d) DERIVATION PROCEEDINGS.—A party to a derivation proceeding who is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board in the proceeding may appeal

the decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, but such appeal shall be dismissed if any adverse party to such derivation proceeding, within 20 days after the appellant has filed notice of appeal in accordance with section 142, files notice with the Director that the party elects to have all further proceedings conducted as provided in section 146. If the appellant does not, within 30 days after the filing of such notice by the adverse party, file a civil action under section 146, the Board's decision shall govern the further proceedings in the case.”.

(2) JURISDICTION.—Section 1295(a)(4)(A) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(A) the Patent Trial and Appeal Board of the United States Patent and Trademark Office with respect to a patent application, derivation proceeding, reexamination, post-grant review, or inter partes review under title 35, at the instance of a party who exercised that party's right to participate in the applicable proceeding before or appeal to the Board, except that an applicant or a party to a derivation proceeding may also have remedy by civil action pursuant to section 145 or 146 of title 35; an appeal under this subparagraph of a decision of the Board with respect to an application or derivation proceeding shall waive the right of such applicant or party to proceed under section 145 or 146 of title 35;”.

(3) PROCEEDINGS ON APPEAL.—Section 143 of title 35, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking the third sentence and inserting the following: “In an ex parte case, the Director shall submit to the court in writing the grounds for the decision of the Patent and Trademark Office, addressing all of the issues raised in the appeal. The Director shall have the right to intervene in an appeal from a decision entered by the Patent Trial and Appeal Board in a derivation proceeding under section 135 or in an inter partes or post- grant review under chapter 31 or 32.”; and

(B) by striking the last sentence.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) ATOMIC ENERGY ACT OF 1954.—Section 152 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2182) is amended in the third undesignated paragraph—

(A) by striking “Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences” each place it appears and inserting “Patent Trial and Appeal Board”; and

(B) by inserting “and derivation” after “established for interference”.

(2) TITLE 51.—Section 20135 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsections (e) and (f), by striking “Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences” each place it appears and inserting “Patent Trial and Appeal Board”; and

(B) in subsection (e), by inserting “and derivation” after “established for interference”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect upon the expiration of the 1-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to proceedings commenced on or after that effective date, except that—

(1) the extension of jurisdiction to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to entertain appeals of decisions of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board in reexaminations under the amendment made by subsection (c)(2) shall be deemed to take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall extend to any decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences with respect to a reexamination that is entered before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) the provisions of sections 6, 134, and 141 of title 35, United States Code, as in effect on the day before the effective date of the amendments made by this section shall continue to apply to inter partes reexaminations that are requested under section 311 of such title before such effective date;

(3) the Patent Trial and Appeal Board may be deemed to be the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences for purposes of appeals of inter partes reexaminations that are requested under section 311 of title 35, United States Code, before the effective date of the amendments made by this section; and

(4) the Director's right under the fourth sentence of section 143 of title 35, United States Code, as amended by subsection (c)(3) of this section, to intervene in an appeal from a decision entered by the Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall be deemed to extend to inter partes reexaminations that are requested under section 311 of such title before the effective date of the amendments made by this section.