

II. Opportunities for Public Comment and Inspection of Comments

The GSP Subcommittee of the TPSC invites comments in support of, or in opposition to, the petition which is the subject of this notice. Submissions should comply with 15 CFR Part 2007, including sections 2007.0 and 2007.1.

Comments should be submitted in fourteen (14) copies, in English, to the Chairman of the GSP Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee, 600 17th Street, NW, Room 518, Washington, DC 20508. Information submitted will be subject to public inspection by appointment with the staff of the USTR public reading room, except for information granted "business confidential" status pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.6 and other qualifying information submitted in confidence pursuant to 15 CFR 2007.7. If the document contains business confidential information, an original and fourteen (14) copies of a nonconfidential version of the submission along with an original and fourteen (14) copies of the confidential version must be submitted. In addition, any document containing confidential information should be clearly marked "confidential" at the top and bottom of each page of the document. The version that does not contain confidential information (the public version) should be clearly marked at the top and bottom of every page (either "public version" or "nonconfidential").

III. Notice of Public Hearings

A hearing will be held on March 23, 1999 at 10:00 a.m. at 1724 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20508. The hearing will be open to the public and a transcript of the hearing will be made available for public inspection or can be purchased from the reporting company. No electronic media coverage will be allowed.

All interested parties wishing to present oral testimony at the hearing must submit the name, address, and telephone number of the witness(es) representing their organization to the Chairman of the GSP Subcommittee. Such requests to present oral testimony at the public hearings should be accompanied by fourteen (14) copies, in English, of a written brief or statement, and should be received by 5 p.m. on March 15, 1999. Oral testimony before the GSP Subcommittee will be limited to ten minute presentations that summarize or supplement information contained in the briefs or statements or supplement information contained in the briefs or statements submitted for the record. Post-hearing and rebuttal

briefs or statements should conform to the regulations cited above and be submitted in fourteen (14) copies, in English, no later than 5 p.m. April 8, 1999. Interested persons not wishing to appear at the public hearings may also submit pre-hearing written briefs or statements by 5:00 p.m. on March 15, 1999, and post-hearing and rebuttal written briefs or statements by April 8, 1999.

Frederick L. Montgomery,
Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.
[FR Doc. 99-1842 Filed 1-26-99; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[USCG-1998-4272]

Annual Certification of Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of recertification.

SUMMARY: Under the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight Act of 1990, the Coast Guard may certify on an annual basis, an alternative voluntary advisory group in lieu of a regional citizens' advisory council for Cook Inlet, Alaska. This certification allows the advisory group to monitor the activities of terminal facilities and crude oil tankers under the Cook Inlet Program established by the statute. The purpose of this notice is to inform the public that the Coast Guard has recertified the alternative voluntary advisory group for Cook Inlet, Alaska. The period of certification is being administratively adjusted to allow realignment of the recertification process with the annual budget year of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (CIRCAC). The effective period of this recertification is from June 1, 1998 to July 31, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information regarding the CIRCAC contact LT Pittmen, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate, Office of Response, (G-MOR-1), (202) 267-0426. For questions on viewing material submitted to the docket, contact Dorothy Walker, Chief, Dockets, Department of Transportation, telephone 202-366-9329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As part of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, Congress passed the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight and Monitoring Act of 1990 (the Act), section 5002, to foster the long-term partnership among industry,

government, and local communities in overseeing compliance with the environmental concerns in the operation of terminal facilities and crude-oil tankers. Subsection 5002(o) permits an alternative voluntary advisory group to represent the communities and interests in the vicinity of the terminal facilities in the Cook Inlet, in lieu of a council of the type specified in subsection 5002(d), if certain conditions are met. The Act requires that the group enter into a contract to ensure annual funding, and that it receive annual certification by the President to the effect that it fosters the general goals and purposes of the Act and is broadly representative of the communities and interests in the vicinity of the terminal facilities and Cook Inlet. Accordingly, in 1991, the President granted certification to the CIRCAC. The authority to certify alternative voluntary advisory groups was subsequently delegated to the Commandant of the Coast Guard and redelegated to the Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

On August 7, 1998, in the **Federal Register**, the Coast Guard announced the availability of the application for recertification that it received from the CIRCAC and requested comments (63 FR 42475). It received 14 comments to the docket.

Discussion of Comments

One commenter indicates that the CIRCAC did not obtain adequate input from the city of Homer. In a meeting with the Executive Director the Coast Guard learned that the Mayor of Homer is now on the Board of the CIRCAC; in addition, the City of Homer offered no letter to the docket indicating any dissatisfaction with the CIRCAC. We believe the CIRCAC has successfully taken steps to resolve this potential difficulty.

One commenter believes the government should fund the CIRCAC. The statute does not authorize federal funding of the CIRCAC. Another commenter complains that the CIRCAC is underfunded. This comment does not pertain directly to the determination of recertification but rather to contractual provisions.

Two commenters complain that the CIRCAC has no vision, goals, and objectives. The CIRCAC indicated in a letter to the Coast Guard clarifying concerns and questions related to recertification that they use the goals and objectives of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) as identified in the context of the alternative voluntary advisory groups. Considering the fact

that Congress used the terms "fostering the goals and purposes of" referring to wording within the Act, the Coast Guard agrees that the Congressionally identified goals satisfy the requirement for vision goals and objectives.

Two commenters indicate a belief that the CIRCAC applies inadequate internal oversight. Based upon the bylaws of the CIRCAC and comments of all other submitters this comment appears unfounded. In the wording of the Act, regional citizens' advisory councils are allowed to be self-governing. The meaning of this is very clear. The Act with respect to the CIRCAC as an alternative voluntary advisory group is even less restrictive by allowing the CIRCAC to foster the goal of self-government.

Two commenters express concern regarding accountability of members to their constituents. Accountability exists in the annual ability of the area or interest group represented by the member to withhold their letter of endorsement.

Two commenters indicate general concerns regarding conflict of interest. The CIRCAC has a conflict of interest policy that is available to the public upon request. There is no specific allegation in either comment of conflict of interest.

Two commenters recommend the Coast Guard require a policy and controls audit. The CIRCAC is encouraged in its recertification letter to conduct an audit and make the results available as part of the next recertification application process.

One commenter indicates that members are sometimes uncooperative. The Coast Guard reminds members of the CIRCAC in its recertification letter of the importance of cooperation.

Twelve commenters recommend recertification. Two commenters suggest that the CIRCAC should not be certified as an alternative voluntary advisory group "but rather as a "Council" under the statute. Since the commenters show numerous examples, and CIRCAC shows additional examples in their application, of fostering the goals and purposes of Section 5002, there is no basis to disallow certification for the purpose of assigning a "Council".

In light of the many positive comments received regarding CIRCAC's performance during the past year and the above analysis, the Coast Guard has determined that recertification in accordance with the Act is appropriate. The Coast Guard has requested the CIRCAC to conduct a policy and controls audit and include documentation in its application next year explaining how each of the issues

raised in the comments has been addressed. Such documentation should include recent correspondence from the CIRCAC to the Coast Guard resolving concerns.

RECERTIFICATION: By letter dated November ____, 1998, the Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection certified that the CIRCAC qualifies as an alternative voluntary advisory group under 33 U.S.C. 2732(o). This recertification terminates on July 31, 1999.

Dated: January 13, 1999

R.C. North

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

[FR Doc. 99-1879 Filed 1-26-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[USCG-1998-4271]

Annual Certification of Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Recertification.

SUMMARY: Under the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight Act of 1990, the Coast Guard may certify on an annual basis, an alternative voluntary advisory group in lieu of a regional citizens' advisory council for Prince William Sound, Alaska. This certification allows the advisory group to monitor the activities of terminal facilities and crude oil tankers under the Prince William Sound Program established by the statute. The purpose of this notice is to inform the public that the Coast Guard has recertified the alternative voluntary advisory group for Prince William Sound, Alaska. The period of certification is being administratively adjusted to allow realignment of the recertification process with the annual budget year of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC). The effective period of this recertification is from June 1, 1998 to January 30, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information regarding the PWSRCAC contact LT Pittman, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate, Office of Response, (G-MOR-1), (202 267-0426. For questions on viewing materials submitted to the docket, contact Dorothy Walker, Chief,

Dockets, Department of Transportation, telephone 202-366-9329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As part of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, Congress passed the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight and Monitoring Act of 1990 (the Act), Section 5002, to foster the long-term partnership among industry, government, and local communities in overseeing compliance with the environmental concerns in the operation of terminal facilities and crude-oil tankers. Subsection 5002(o) permits an alternative voluntary advisory group to represent the communities and interests in the vicinity of the terminal facilities in the Prince William Sound, in lieu of a council of the type specified in subsection 5002(d), if certain conditions are met.

The Act requires that the group enter into a contract to ensure annual funding, and that it receive annual certification by the President to the effect that it fosters the general goals and purposes of the Act, and is broadly representative of the communities and interests in the vicinity of the terminal facilities and Prince William Sound. Accordingly, in 1991, the President granted certification to the PWSRCAC. The authority to certify alternative advisory groups was subsequently delegated to the Commandant of the Coast Guard and redelegated to the Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

On August 7, 1998, the Coast Guard announced in the **Federal Register** the availability of the application for recertification that it received from the PWSRCAC and requested comments (63 FR 42475). It received twenty-one comments to the docket.

Discussion of Comments

One commenter expresses concern about the "jurisdiction limits of the PWSRCAC". Contrary to a "Council" that would have operating limits clearly delineated, the alternative voluntary advisory group is limited to certain regions or terminal facilities but not in the scope of its allowable actions. This stems from the wording of the statute itself. The Act does not preclude actions often termed "outside of the intent" of OPA 90 as long as the voluntary alternative group meets the recertification threshold for alternative voluntary advisory groups, as follows: "fosters the general goals and purposes of this section and is broadly representative * * *." Due to the fact that the action in question (evaluation of a proposed pipeline) appears "representative of the communities and