

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement;
Desha County, Arkansas and Bolivar
County, Mississippi**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed location of I-69 from US 65 in Desha County, Arkansas to State Highway 1 in Bolivar County, Mississippi, including a crossing of the Mississippi River.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Randal Looney, Environmental Specialist, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Office Building, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3130 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3298, Telephone: (501) 324-6430; Mr. Bill Richardson, Asst. Division Head, Environmental Division, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), 10324 Interstate 30, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-2398, Telephone: (501) 569-2379; or Mr. Claiborne Barnwell, Environmental Division Engineer, Office of Intermodal Planning, Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), 401 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1850, Telephone: (601) 359-7920.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and the Mississippi Department of Transportation will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to build a section of independent utility (SIU) for the proposed Interstate 69. The new facility would include a new roadway and bridge crossing of the Mississippi River connecting U.S. Highway 65 in Arkansas with Route 1 in Mississippi. Project distance is approximately 25 miles. Information developed by a previous EIS for the location of the Great River Bridge and other preliminary documents pertaining to the I-69 corridor will be used in this study.

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) The no build and (2) constructing a four-lane, limited access highway within the limits described above, on various alignment alternatives.

A scoping process has been initiated that involves all appropriate federal and state agencies and Native American Tribes. This will continue throughout the study as an ongoing process. A

formal scoping meeting will be held for the project. A public information effort will be initiated in December, 2000, to include those agencies, local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed, or are known to have, interest in this proposal. This will include all coordination required under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act. Public informational meetings will be held in the study area to engage the regional community in the decision-making process and to obtain public input. In addition, public hearings will be held to present information developed by the environmental studies and to obtain comments and recommendations from the public. Public notice will be given concerning the time and place of informational meetings and public hearings. The Draft EIS will be made available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and EIS should be directed to the FHWA, or AHTD, or MDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: December 11, 2000.

Gary A. DalPorto,

Planning and Research Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement:
Loudoun, Fauquier, Fairfax, Prince
William, and Stafford Counties, VA**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is issuing this notice to advise the public of its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for potential transportation improvements in the western portion of

Northern Virginia, between Route 7 in Loudoun County and Interstate 95 in Stafford County, to address growing regional transportation needs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edward Sundra, Senior Environmental Specialist and Acting Planning and Environmental Team Manager, Federal Highway Administration, Post Office Box 10249, Richmond, Virginia 23240-0249, Telephone 804-775-3338.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1995, the Western Transportation Corridor (WTC) Major Investment Study (MIS) was initiated in accordance with 23 CFR 450.318 to develop and document a purpose and need for transportation improvements in the western portion of Northern Virginia and to identify the modal type(s) and general corridor for those transportation improvements. It was intended that the regional government would use the results of the WTC MIS for purposes of long range transportation planning. In December of 1997, that WTC MIS was completed which resulted in the identification for detailed study of a transportation system management/travel demand management alternative, a links alternative, and new facility alternatives. The WTC MIS was reopened in 1998 for additional coordination, and a Coordination Report was issued by VDOT in October of 1998. In developing the WTC MIS, VDOT studied and developed information on a variety of issues including, but not limited to, the need for transportation improvements, identification and screening of a broad range of alternatives, traffic, land use, natural resources, historic and archaeological resources, parklands, air quality, noise, hazardous materials, and cost. Additional information on the WTC MIS conducted for this project and its outcomes can be found at <http://www.vdot.state.va.us/proj/fred/wtcx.html>.

With this notice of intent, FHWA and VDOT are initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the WTC to study potential transportation improvements in the western portion of Northern Virginia between Route 7 in Loudoun County and Interstate 95 in Stafford County, just north of the City of Fredericksburg, to accommodate anticipated growth in population and employment and address increasing travel demand and regional access needs.

As part of the NEPA process, the WTC MIS purpose and need will be revisited and revised as necessary to account for any changes in regional needs or goals.

Likewise, the alternatives development and screening process from the WTC MIS will be used as a starting point for the NEPA process. Recognizing that NEPA requires the consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives that will address the purpose and need, the Environmental Impact Statement will include a range of alternatives for detailed study consisting of a no-build alternative as well as alternatives consisting of transportation system management strategies, mass transit, improvements to existing roadways, and/or new alignment facilities. These alternatives will be developed, screened, and carried forward for detailed analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement based on their ability to address the purpose and need that will be developed while avoiding known and sensitive resources.

Letters describing the proposed NEPA study and soliciting input will be sent to the appropriate Federal, State and local agencies who have expressed or are known to have an interest or legal role in this proposal. It is anticipated that two formal scoping meetings will be held as part of the NEPA process, one in the Fredericksburg area and one in Northern Virginia, to facilitate local, state, and federal agency involvement and input into the project in an effort to identify all of the issues that need to be addressed in developing the Environmental Impact Statement.

Private organizations, citizens, and interest groups will also have an opportunity to provide input into the development of the Environmental Impact Statement and identify issues that should be addressed. A comprehensive public participation program will be developed to involve them in the project development process. This program will utilize the following outreach efforts to provide information and solicit input: newsletters, the Internet, a telephone hotline, e-mail, informal meetings, public information meetings, public hearings and other efforts as necessary and appropriate. Notices of public meetings or public hearings will be given through various forums providing the time and place of the meeting along with other relevant information. The draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are identified and taken into account, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning the proposed action and draft Environmental Impact

Statement should be directed to FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this proposed action.)

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: December 8, 2000.

Edward S. Sundra,

Senior Environmental Specialist.

[FR Doc. 00-32294 Filed 12-18-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD-2000-8517]

Pacific Knight; Applicability of Ownership and Control Requirements for Fishery Endorsement

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Invitation for public comments on a petition requesting MARAD to issue a determination that the ownership and control requirements of the American Fisheries Act of 1998 and 46 CFR part 356 are in conflict with an international investment agreement.

SUMMARY: The Maritime Administration (MARAD, we, our, or us) is soliciting public comments on a petition from the owners of the vessel PACIFIC KNIGHT, Official Number 561771 (Vessel), for a ruling that the requirements of MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 356 and the American Fisheries Act of 1998 (AFA), Title II, Division C, Pub. L. 105-277, do not apply with respect to the Vessel. The petition is submitted pursuant to 46 CFR 356.53 and section 213(g) of the AFA, which provide that the requirements of the AFA and the implementing regulations will not apply to the owners or mortgagees of a U.S.-flag vessel documented with a fishery endorsement to the extent that the provisions of the AFA conflict with an existing international agreement relating to foreign investment to which the United States is a party. This notice sets forth the provisions of the international agreement that the Petitioner alleges are in conflict with the AFA and 46 CFR part 356 and the arguments submitted by the Petitioner in support of its request. If MARAD determines that the AFA and MARAD's implementing regulations conflict with the bilateral investment treaty, the requirements of

46 CFR part 356 will be determined not to apply the Vessel to the extent of the inconsistency. Accordingly, interested parties are invited to submit their views on this petition and whether there is a conflict between the international agreement and the requirements of both the AFA and 46 CFR part 356. In addition to receiving the views of interested parties, MARAD will consult with other Departments and Agencies within the Federal Government that have responsibility or expertise related to the interpretation of or application of international investment agreements.

DATES: You should submit your comments early enough to ensure that Docket Management receives them not later than January 18, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document. Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, Department of Transportation, 400 7th St., SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You may also send comments electronically via the Internet at <http://smses.dot.gov/submit>. All comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection and copying at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. An electronic version of this document and all documents entered into this docket is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John T. Marquez, Jr., of the Office of Chief Counsel at (202) 366-5320. You may send mail to John T. Marquez, Jr., Maritime Administration, Office of Chief Counsel, Room 7228, MAR-222, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001 or you may send e-mail to "John.Marquez@marad.dot.gov".

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The AFA, Title II, Division C, Public Law 105-277, was enacted in 1998 to give U.S. interests a priority in the harvest of U.S.-fishery resources by increasing the requirements for U.S. citizen ownership, control and financing of U.S.-flag vessels documented with a fishery endorsement. MARAD was charged with promulgating implementing regulations for fishing vessels of 100 feet or greater in registered length while the Coast Guard retains responsibility for vessels under 100 feet.

Section 202 of the AFA, raises, with some exceptions, the U.S.-Citizen ownership and control standards for U.S.-flag vessels that are documented