

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Coast Guard

[USCG-2006-26416]

### Voyage Data Recorder Study

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DHS.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for information.

**SUMMARY:** This notice solicits public input as part of a study on the feasibility, cost and associated concerns or benefits with the installation of voyage data recorders on passenger vessels. In the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006, the Congress directed the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct a study of the carriage of voyage data recorders (VDR) by certain passenger vessels. As part of this study, the Coast Guard is to look at the standards, the methods for approval of models, and the procedures for the annual testing of the VDR.

**DATES:** Information and related material must reach the Docket Management Facility on or before February 6, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit information identified by Coast Guard docket number USCG-2006-26416 to the Docket Management Facility at the U.S. Department of Transportation. To avoid duplication, please use only one of the following methods:

- (1) Web site: <http://dms.dot.gov>.
- (2) Mail: Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- (3) Fax: 202-493-2251.
- (4) Delivery: Room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.
- (5) Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions on the Web site.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions on this notice, call or e-mail Ms. Dolores Mercier, U.S. Coast Guard Office of Design and Engineering Standards, telephone 202-372-1381, e-mail

[dolores.mercier@uscg.mil](mailto:dolores.mercier@uscg.mil). If you have questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, call Renee V. Wright, Program Manager, Docket Operations, telephone 202-493-0402.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Request for Information

All comments and information received will be posted, without change,

to <http://dms.dot.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. We have an agreement with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to use the Docket Management Facility. Please see DOT's "Privacy Act" paragraph below.

**Submitting comments and information:** If you submit information, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this notice (USCG-2006-26416) and give the reason for each comment or for bringing information to our attention. You may submit your information by electronic means, mail, fax, or delivery to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**; but please submit your information by only one means. If you submit them by mail or delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit them by mail and would like to know that they reached the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and information received during the comment period.

**Viewing comments and documents:** To view comments, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time and conduct a simple search using the docket number. You may also visit the Docket Management Facility in room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**Privacy Act:** Anyone can search the electronic form of all comments and information received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review the Department of Transportation's Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477), or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

#### Background and Purpose

In the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006, section 420, Congress directed the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct a study of the carriage of voyage data recorders (VDR) by passenger vessels described in section 2101(22)(D) of title 46, United States Code, carrying more than 399 passengers. The study is to include the standards, the methods for approval of models, and the procedures for the annual testing of the VDR's.

The vessels that this study involves are ferries of at least 100 gross tons as measured under title 46 U.S.C. section

14502 or an alternative tonnage measured under title 46 U.S.C. 14302, providing transportation only between places that are not more than 300 miles apart carrying more than 399 passengers.

This study will review the history of VDR's, their current regulation and carriage requirements, the cost of the equipment, and the potential benefits. Consultation from both VDR manufacturer's and the operators of the affected ferries will be included.

Through this notice, the Coast Guard asks for comments and information related to the carriage of VDR's. The most helpful comments will be those that include details about:

- Installation;
- Equipment costs;
- Operational requirements;
- VDR equipment standards and approval methods; and
- Training requirements.

In submitting comments on these issues, the Coast Guard recognizes and encourages input from all parties that will be affected if the carriage requirement becomes mandatory. The following questions should assist you in submitting your comments.

- What are the potential benefits from the installation of a VDR?
- For passenger vessels subject to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 2000 amendments, the Coast Guard has implemented standards for VDR's as well as methods of approval and procedures for the annual performance testing. Should the Coast Guard use these established standards and procedures for the purposes of this study?
  - What would be the potential cost of equipment and installation?
  - What types of equipment inputs would be required vs. the equipment inputs that are actually available?
  - Would the crew need to change operational practices?
  - What additional training, if any would be required?
  - In what type of marine incidents (e.g., grounding, collisions, etc) would VDR's prove the most useful?
  - Should the Coast Guard consider the use of a Simplified Voyage Data Recorder (S-VDR) in lieu of a VDR?
    - What is the operational feasibility of recovering the VDR data box?
    - What would be the guidelines for the ownership and or rights to access the data?
      - If carriage of the VDR becomes mandatory, what would be a reasonable timeline for implementation?
      - Would the carriage of VDR's on other domestic vessels be beneficial? If so, which vessels and why?

• Is the current threshold of 399 passengers or more appropriate? Should other thresholds be considered?

The voyage data recorder study report will be available to the public, and comments submitted in response to this notice will be addressed in the report.

Dated: December 4, 2006.

**Howard L. Hime,**

*Acting Director of National and International Standards, Assistant Commandant for Prevention, U.S. Coast Guard.*

[FR Doc. E6-20801 Filed 12-7-06; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-15-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. FR-5045-N-49]

### Federal Property Suitable as Facilities To Assist the Homeless

**AGENCY:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, HUD.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice identifies unutilized, underutilized, excess, and surplus Federal property reviewed by HUD for suitability for possible use to assist the homeless.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** December 8, 2006.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Kathy Ezzell, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Room 7262, 451 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20410; telephone (202) 708-1234; TTY number for the hearing- and speech-impaired (202) 708-2565, (these telephone numbers are not toll-free), or call the toll-free Title V information line at 1-800-927-7588.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with the December 12, 1988 court order in *National Coalition for the Homeless v. Veterans Administration*, No. 88-2503-OG (D.D.C.), HUD publishes a Notice, on a weekly basis, identifying unutilized, underutilized, excess and surplus Federal buildings and real property that HUD has reviewed for suitability for use to assist the homeless. Today's Notice is for the purpose of announcing that no additional properties have been determined suitable or unsuitable this week.

Dated: November 30, 2006.

**Mark R. Johnston,**

*Acting Deputy Assistant, Secretary for Special Needs.*

[FR Doc. 06-9533 Filed 12-07-06; 8:45am]

**BILLING CODE 4210-67-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor Counties, FL

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service announces that a Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor Counties, Florida, is available for distribution. The plan was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and describes how the refuge will be managed for the next 15 years.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the plan may be obtained by writing: Mary Morris, Natural Resources Planner, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 68, St. Marks, Florida 32355, or by calling: 850/925-6121. The plan may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Website: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>, or from the refuge's Website: <http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks/>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for a 60-day public review and comment period was announced in the **Federal Register** on January 20, 2006 (71 FR 3317). Three public meetings were held on February 16, 22, and 23, 2006, in Panacea, Crawfordville, and Tallahassee, Florida, respectively. At least 56 persons attended these public meetings. Numerous letters and e-mails were received from individuals and organizations expressing comments on the draft plan and environmental assessment. The draft plan and environmental assessment was circulated to ten agencies as part of the Florida Clearinghouse process. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection found the draft plan and environmental assessment consistent with the State's Coastal Management Program.

The draft plan and environmental assessment identified and evaluated three alternatives for managing the refuge. Alternative 1, the "status quo" alternative, would continue current management and public use. Alternative

2 would focus on enhancement of wildlife populations and related habitats and would provide visitors with more opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. Environmental education and outreach would expand under this alternative. Under Alternative 3, the biological programs of the refuge would be greatly enhanced.

Based on the environmental assessment and the comments received, the Service adopted Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative. The priority issues addressed under this alternative are: Habitat protection and land conservation; migratory birds; partnerships; fire and forest management; exotic, invasive, and nuisance species; wildlife inventory and monitoring; imperiled species management; visitor services; and wilderness and cultural resources protection.

The Service believes that Alternative 2 will best achieve national, ecosystem, and refuge-specific goals and objectives and positively address significant issues and concerns expressed by the public.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931 as a breeding ground for wild animals and birds. The refuge is situated along the Gulf coast of northwest Florida, about 25 miles south of Tallahassee. It currently covers about 69,155 acres with an approved acquisition boundary of 74,469 acres. Refuge personnel also manage 947 acres of State land and 334 acres of USDA Forest Service land within the approved acquisition boundary. The Wilderness Act designated 17,446 acres as the St. Marks Wilderness. The refuge aims to provide habitat for a natural diversity of plants and animals with a primary purpose of wildlife habitat conservation. The refuge is also being managed to provide opportunity for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

**Authority:** This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: July 5, 2006.

**Cynthia K. Dohner,**

*Acting Regional Director.*

**Editorial note:** This document was received at the Office of the Federal Register on 12-5-06.

[FR Doc. 06-9591 Filed 12-7-06; 8:45 am]

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