

SUMMARY: As authorized by 46 U.S.C. 12121, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to grant waivers of the U.S.-build requirement of the coastwise laws under certain circumstances. A request for such a waiver has been received by MARAD. The vessel, and a brief description of the proposed service, is listed below.

DATES: Submit comments on or before November 27, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to docket number MARAD-2013-0118. Written comments may be submitted by hand or by mail to the Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. You may also send comments electronically via the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>. 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://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Williams, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W23-453, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-0903, Email Linda.Williams@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

As described by the applicant the intended service of the vessel BIG OL is: *Intended Commercial Use of Vessel:* "Limited 6 or fewer charter."

Geographic Region: "New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina."

The complete application is given in DOT docket MARAD-2013-0118 at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. If MARAD determines, in accordance with 46 U.S.C. 12121 and MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388, that the issuance of the waiver will have an unduly adverse effect on a U.S.-vessel builder or a business that uses U.S.-flag vessels in that business, a waiver will not be granted. Comments should refer to the docket number of this notice and the vessel name in order for MARAD to properly consider the

comments. Comments should also state the commenter's interest in the waiver application, and address the waiver criteria given in § 388.4 of MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR Part 388.

Privacy Act

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments 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 DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78).

Dated: October 22, 2013.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Julie P. Agarwal,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 2013-25417 Filed 10-25-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD-2013-0101]

National Maritime Strategy Symposium: Cargo Opportunities and Sealift Capacity

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for agenda topics for a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Maritime Administration (MARAD) invites the public and other Marine Transportation System stakeholders to participate in a discussion intended to develop a robust national maritime strategy. The purpose of this public meeting is to gather ideas for improving the Nation's cargo opportunities and sealift capacity while ensuring future sustainability. Speaker and topic proposals for the public meeting's agenda are requested and may be submitted to the docket referenced above. The meeting agenda will be published in the docket and on the MARAD Web site at a later date, after consideration of responses received in the docket.

DATES: We plan to hold the public meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, January 14 through January 16, 2014.

Key Date: The deadline to submit agenda topics and ideas for discussion is November 29, 2013.

See Submitting your agenda topics, comments and ideas below for specific directions.

The following are other important anticipated dates and deadlines:

Agenda released on MARAD docket and MARAD website; Registration opens—December 17, 2013
Deadline to register to attend the public meeting in person—January 3, 2014
Deadline to register to speak in person, speak by calling in, or to listen only by phone—January 3, 2014
Deadline to submit digital presentation materials—January 3, 2014
Call-in and Listen-only information distributed to registrants—January 8, 2014
Public Meeting—January 14–16, 2014 9:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held in the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) West Atrium, located on the ground floor of 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Overflow seating will be available in adjacent conference rooms.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christine S. Gurland, Assistant Chief Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Chief Counsel, MAR-225, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, Washington, DC 20590; (202) 366-5157; email: Christine.Gurland@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Marine Transportation System is a core component of the United States' economic and national security. While it has proven to be strong and resilient, there is a need to improve and grow the industry to ensure the availability and viability of a U.S. Merchant Marine in the future. The historic strength of the United States as a maritime Nation relies on its global, coastal and inland commercial fleet, its ports and intermodal facilities, the national security establishment and the maritime workforce that supports and operates U.S.-flagged vessels. The purpose of this public meeting is to generate ideas that will improve, strengthen and sustain the cargo opportunities and sealift capacity. Those ideas will necessarily be focused on the U. S. Marine Transportation System.

Request for Public Input to Meeting Agenda and Topics for Discussion

1. The agenda for the meeting will be developed in collaboration with the public. The public is invited to propose agenda topics and to comment on the ideas submitted by others at <http://www.regulations.gov>, DOT Docket Number MARAD-2013-0101.

2. Proposed agenda items should focus on, but are not limited to, the

following topics: fostering and improving the U.S.-flag fleet; improving transportation efficiency, speed, availability and cost-effectiveness; methods to improve overall U.S. economic competitiveness through improvements to the Marine Transportation System; improving transportation efficiency through interoperability with existing infrastructure systems and other modes of transportation; reduction of marine transportation pollution and adverse environmental impact; expansion of the pool of skilled and available U.S. mariners; developing strategically valuable capacity; increasing economical waterborne carriage for U.S. businesses; improving U.S. port operations and related businesses; improvement of global business and employment opportunities for the Nation; and fostering the construction and repair of vessels in U.S. shipyards.

3. Please provide a brief narrative to describe each topic you would like the public meeting to address. This information will help ensure proper coverage of the many topics and ideas we anticipate to be proposed. To ensure that comments are most useful in development of the meeting agenda and informing our deliberation and decision process, please provide citations to statutes or regulations to which you refer and supply any supporting information that would assist MARAD in establishing the agenda.

4. If you would like to propose a topic or an idea and would like to make a presentation on that topic or idea, please indicate your desire to make a presentation and that you will provide a summary paper or presentation materials in support of that topic or idea you are proposing for the agenda. Supporting materials can be submitted to the docket at a later date.

5. Comments received during development of the meeting agenda and any subsequent review will provide meaningful and significant information for senior MARAD officials considering topics to be discussed at the public meeting. We will endeavor to include all relevant topics proposed in the meeting agenda.

6. We will post the public meeting agenda to the docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> and on our Web site at <http://www.MARAD.dot.gov> by December 17, 2013.

Submitting Your Agenda Topics, Comments, and Ideas

1. We have opened a docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> to allow for submission of written proposals of

agenda items for the National Maritime Strategy Symposium.

2. You may submit your inputs identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD-2013-0101 by any of the following methods: Web site/Federal eRulemaking Portal, Fax, Mail or Hand Delivery. Please use only one of these means for each submission. All submissions must include the agency name and docket number for this matter. Specific instructions follow.

3. For the Web site/Federal eRulemaking Portal, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the electronic docket site. To submit your input, type the docket number (MARAD-2013-0101) in the "SEARCH" box and click "SEARCH." Click on "Submit a Comment" on the line associated with this Docket Number. If you submit an agenda topic, comment or idea online via www.regulations.gov, please note that inputs submitted to www.regulations.gov are not immediately posted to the site. It may take several business days before your submission will be posted on the electronic docket.

4. For submission by telefacsimile/FAX, transmit your agenda topic, comment or idea to (202) 493-2251. Be sure to identify the submission by DOT Docket Number MARAD-2013-0101.

5. Submissions by Mail or Hand Delivery should go to Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. If you submit your inputs by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit comments by mail and would like to know that they reached the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope.

6. If you FAX, mail or hand deliver your input we recommend that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address or a telephone number in the body of your document so that we can contact you if we have questions regarding your submission.

7. **Note:** All agenda topics, comments or ideas submitted for this purpose, including any personal information provided, will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

8. For access to the docket to read background documents or inputs received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> at any time or to Room W12-140 of the Department of

Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. To view the docket electronically, type the docket number "MARAD-2013-0101" in the "SEARCH" box and click "Search." Click and Open Docket Folder on the line associated with this rulemaking.

Anticipated Public Meeting Procedures

1. Additional details and registration instructions will be provided when the meeting and final agenda are announced in December.

2. The meeting is intended to collect public views and gather information to consider in developing a new maritime strategy. Therefore, the meeting will be conducted in an informal and non-adversarial manner.

3. The Maritime Administrator will preside over the public meeting. Senior Department and MARAD officials will also attend this meeting to receive comments from the public. During the meeting, we may ask questions that will clarify statements or gather more information or data to help us understand the issues raised by commenters.

4. Those who wish to speak during the meeting will be requested to advise, *no later than November 29th*, what topic or topics they would like to address through a presentation or on which they would like to comment; presentations and amplifying information will be welcome but are not required. We hope to be able to accommodate everyone who would like to speak at the meeting, but if there are more interested participants than time available, we will limit participants in order of date and time of registration. If available, time will be allotted to those attending the meeting in person to speak, even if they had not previously registered to speak. For those who wish to make comments, but for whom there is not time available or who do not wish to speak, it will be possible to post comments to the public docket. [See also Submitting your agenda topics, comments, and ideas section.]

5. The public meeting will be broadcast via live Web streaming by a link from <http://www.MARAD.dot.gov> and a listen-only telephone connection for which participants will need to register at a later date. Members of the public will be invited to make comments in person at the venue, through a call-in number, or by entry in the MARAD docket. Further details regarding the logistics of the public meeting will be published in a second

notice in the **Federal Register** prior to the meeting.

6. A transcript of the public meeting will be made available via our Web site at <http://www.MARAD.dot.gov> and posted to the docket at www.regulations.gov. The recorded webcast video will remain available following the meeting via a link from our Web site at www.MARAD.dot.gov.

Privacy Act Statement

Anyone is able to search all comments entered 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 DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19476, 04/11/2011) or at <http://www.dot.gov/privacy.html>.

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 610; E.O., 13563, 76 FR 3821, Jan. 21 2011; E.O. 12866, 58 FR 51735, Oct. 4, 1993.

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Dated: October 23, 2013.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Julie Agarwal,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 2013-25396 Filed 10-25-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement Open Season

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of open season for enrollment in the VISA program.

SUMMARY: The Maritime Administration (MARAD) announces that the open season for Fiscal Year 2014 applications for participation in the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) program will run for 30 days beginning today and ending November 27, 2013. The purpose of this notice is to invite interested, qualified U.S.-flag vessel operators that are not currently enrolled in the VISA program to apply. This is the only planned enrollment period for carriers to join the VISA program and derive benefits for Department of Defense (DOD) peacetime contracts initiated during the period from October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014.

Any U.S.-flag vessel operator organized under the laws of a state of the United States, or the District of Columbia, who is able and willing to commit militarily useful sealift assets and assume the related consequential

risks of commercial disruption, may be eligible to participate in the VISA program.

The mission of VISA is to provide commercial sealift and intermodal shipping services and systems, including vessels, vessel space, intermodal systems and equipment, terminal facilities, and related management services, to the Department of Defense (DOD), as necessary, to meet national defense contingency requirements or national emergencies. Carriers enrolled in the VISA program provide DOD with assured access to such services during contingencies. In return for their VISA commitment, DOD gives VISA participants priority for peacetime cargos.

DATES: VISA Program applications must be received on or before November 27, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Submit applications and questions related to this notice to Jerome D. Davis, Director, Office of Sealift Support, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone (202) 366-0688; Fax (202) 366-5904.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jerome D. Davis, Director, Office of Sealift Support, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone (202) 366-0688; Fax (202) 366-5904, or visit <http://www.marad.dot.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The VISA program was established pursuant to Section 708 of the Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended (DPA). The VISA program was created to provide for voluntary agreements for emergency preparedness programs. Pursuant to the DPA, voluntary agreements for preparedness programs, including the VISA program expire five (5) years after the date they became effective.

The VISA program is open to U.S.-flag vessel operators of oceangoing militarily useful vessels, to include tugs and barges. An operator is defined as an owner or bareboat charterer of a vessel. Tug enrollment alone does not satisfy VISA eligibility. Operators include vessel owners and bareboat charter operators if satisfactory signed agreements are in place committing the assets of the owner to VISA. Voyage and space charterers are not considered U.S.-flag vessel operators for purposes of VISA eligibility.

VISA Concept

The VISA program provides for the staged, time-phased availability of participants' shipping services/systems through pre-negotiated contracts between the Government and participants. Such arrangements are jointly planned with the MARAD, USTRANSCOM, and participants in peacetime to allow effective and best valued use of commercial sealift capacity, provide DOD assured contingency access, and to minimize commercial disruption.

There are three time-phased stages in the event of VISA activation. VISA Stages I and II provide for pre-negotiated contracts between DOD and participants to provide sealift capacity to meet all projected DOD contingency requirements. These contracts are executed in accordance with approved DOD contracting methodologies. VISA Stage III provides for additional capacity to DOD when Stages I and II commitments or volunteered capacity are insufficient to meet contingency requirements, and adequate shipping services from non-participants are not available through established DOD contracting practices or U.S. Government treaty agreements.

Exceptions to This Open Season

The only exception to this open season period for VISA enrollment will be for a non-VISA carrier that reflags a vessel into U.S. registry. That carrier may submit an application to participate in the VISA program at any time upon completion of reflagging.

Advantages of Peacetime Participation

In return for their VISA commitment, DOD awards peacetime cargo contracts to VISA participants on a priority basis. Award of DOD cargoes to meet DOD peacetime and contingency requirements is made on the basis of the following priorities: U.S.-flag vessel capacity operated by VISA participants and U.S.-flag Vessel Sharing Agreement (VSA) capacity held by VISA participants; U.S.-flag vessel capacity operated by non-participants; Combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag vessel capacity operated by VISA participants, and combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag VSA capacity held by VISA participants; Combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag vessel capacity operated by non-participants; U.S.-owned or operated foreign-flag vessel capacity and VSA capacity held by VISA participants; U.S.-owned or operated foreign-flag vessel capacity and VSA capacity held by non-participants; and