

**SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

[Disaster Declaration #15798 and #15799;  
California Disaster Number CA-00295]

**Presidential Declaration Amendment of  
a Major Disaster for the State of  
California**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Small Business  
Administration.

**ACTION:** Amendment 1.

**SUMMARY:** This is an amendment of the  
Presidential declaration of a major  
disaster for the State of California  
(FEMA-4407-DR), dated 11/12/2018.

*Incident:* Wildfires.

*Incident Period:* 11/08/2018 through  
11/25/2018.

**DATES:** Issued on 11/26/2018.

*Physical Loan Application Deadline  
Date:* 01/11/2019.

*Economic Injury (EIDL) Loan  
Application Deadline Date:* 08/12/2019.

**ADDRESS:** Submit completed loan  
applications to: U.S. Small Business  
Administration, Processing and  
Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport  
Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** A.  
Escobar, Office of Disaster Assistance,  
U.S. Small Business Administration,  
409 3rd Street SW, Suite 6050,  
Washington, DC 20416, (202) 205-6734.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The notice  
of the President's major disaster  
declaration for the State of  
CALIFORNIA, dated 11/12/2018, is  
hereby amended to establish the  
incident period for this disaster as  
beginning 11/08/2018 and continuing  
through 11/25/2018.

All other information in the original  
declaration remains unchanged.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance  
Number 59008)

**James Rivera,**

*Associate Administrator for Disaster  
Assistance.*

[FR Doc. 2018-26682 Filed 12-7-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE** 8025-01-P

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

[Public Notice: 10630]

**Request for Information for the 2019  
Trafficking in Persons Report**

**AGENCY:** Department of State.

**ACTION:** Request for information.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of State ("the  
Department") requests written  
information to assist in reporting on the  
degree to which the United States and  
foreign governments meet the minimum

standards for the elimination of  
trafficking in persons ("minimum  
standards") that are prescribed by the  
Trafficking Victims Protection Act  
("TVPA"). This information will assist  
in the preparation of the *Trafficking in  
Persons Report* ("TIP Report") that the  
Department submits annually to the  
U.S. Congress on government efforts to  
meet the minimum standards. Foreign  
governments that do not meet the  
minimum standards and are not making  
significant efforts to do so may be  
subject to restrictions on  
nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related  
foreign assistance from the United  
States, as defined by the TVPA.

**DATES:** Submissions must be received by  
5 p.m. on January 15, 2019.

**ADDRESSES:** Written submissions and  
supporting documentation may be  
submitted by the following methods:

- *Email (preferred):* [tipreport@state.gov](mailto:tipreport@state.gov) for submissions related to foreign governments and [tipreportUS@state.gov](mailto:tipreportUS@state.gov) for submissions related to the United States.

- *Facsimile (fax):* 202-453-8562.

- *Mail, Express Delivery, Hand  
Delivery and Messenger Service:* U.S.  
Department of State, Office to Monitor  
and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/  
TIP), 2201 C Street NW, SA-09 Suite  
NE3054, Washington, DC 20520-0903.  
Please note that materials submitted by  
mail may be delayed due to security  
screenings and processing.

*Scope of Interest:* The Department  
requests information relevant to  
assessing the United States' and foreign  
governments' efforts to meet the  
minimum standards for the elimination  
of trafficking in persons during the  
reporting period (April 1, 2018-March  
31, 2019). The minimum standards are  
listed in the *Background* section or can  
be found here. Submissions must  
include information relevant to efforts  
to meet the minimum standards and  
should include, but need not be limited  
to, answering the questions in the  
*Information Sought* section.

Submissions need not include answers  
to all the questions; only those  
questions for which the submitter has  
direct professional experience should be  
answered and that experience should be  
noted. For any critique or deficiency  
described, please provide a  
recommendation to remedy it. Note the  
country or countries that are the focus  
of the submission.

Submissions may include written  
narratives that answer the questions  
presented in this Notice, research,  
studies, statistics, fieldwork, training  
materials, evaluations, assessments, and  
other relevant evidence of local, state/

provincial, and federal/central  
government efforts. To the extent  
possible, precise dates and numbers of  
officials or citizens affected should be  
included.

Written narratives providing factual  
information should provide citations of  
sources, and copies of and links to the  
source material should be provided.  
Please send electronic copies of the  
entire submission, including source  
material. If primary sources are used,  
such as research studies, interviews,  
direct observations, or other sources of  
quantitative or qualitative data, provide  
details on the research or data-gathering  
methodology and any supporting  
documentation. The Department does  
not include in the *TIP Report*, and is  
therefore not seeking, information on  
prostitution, migrant smuggling, visa  
fraud, or child abuse, unless such  
conduct occurs in the context of  
trafficking in persons as defined in the  
TVPA.

*Confidentiality:* Please provide the  
name, phone number, and email address  
of a single point of contact for any  
submission. It is Department practice  
not to identify in the *TIP Report*  
information concerning sources to  
safeguard those sources. Please note,  
however, that any information  
submitted to the Department may be  
releasable pursuant to the provisions of  
the Freedom of Information Act or other  
applicable law. Submissions related to  
the United States will be shared with  
U.S. government agencies, as will  
submissions relevant to efforts by other  
U.S. government agencies.

*Response:* This is a request for  
information only; there will be no  
response to submissions.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****I. Background**

*The TIP Report:* The *TIP Report* is the  
most comprehensive worldwide report  
on governments' efforts to combat  
trafficking in persons. It represents an  
annually updated, global look at the  
nature and scope of trafficking in  
persons and the broad range of  
government actions to confront and  
eliminate it. The U.S. government uses  
the *Report* to engage in diplomacy, to  
encourage partnership in creating and  
implementing laws and policies to  
combat trafficking, and to target  
resources on prevention, protection, and  
prosecution programs. Worldwide, the  
*Report* is used by international  
organizations, foreign governments, and  
nongovernmental organizations as a tool  
to examine where resources are most  
needed. Prosecuting traffickers,  
protecting victims, and preventing  
trafficking are the ultimate goals of the

*Report* and of the U.S government's anti-trafficking policy.

The Department prepares the *TIP Report* using information from across the U.S. government, foreign government officials, nongovernmental and international organizations, survivors of trafficking in persons, published reports, and research trips to every region. The *Report* focuses on concrete actions that governments take to fight trafficking in persons, including prosecutions, convictions, and sentences for traffickers, as well as victim protection measures and prevention efforts. Each *Report* narrative also includes recommendations for each country. These recommendations are used to assist the Department in measuring governments' progress from one year to the next and determining whether governments meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons or are making significant efforts to do so.

The TVPA creates a four-tier ranking system. Tier placement is based principally on the extent of government action to combat trafficking. The Department first evaluates whether the government fully meets the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Governments that do so are placed on Tier 1. For other governments, the Department considers the extent of such efforts. Governments that are making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards are placed on Tier 2. Governments that do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so are placed on Tier 3. Finally, the Department considers Special Watch List criteria and, when applicable, places countries on Tier 2 Watch List. For more information, the 2018 *TIP Report* can be found at [www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/index.htm).

Since the inception of the *TIP Report* in 2001, the number of countries included and ranked has more than doubled; the 2018 *TIP Report* included 187 countries and territories. Around the world, the *TIP Report* and the promising practices reflected therein have inspired legislation, national action plans, policy implementation, program funding, protection mechanisms that complement prosecution efforts, and a stronger global understanding of this crime.

Since 2003, the primary reporting on the United States' anti-trafficking activities has been through the annual Attorney General's Report to Congress and Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Human Trafficking ("AG Report") mandated by section 105 of the TVPA (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)).

Since 2010, the *TIP Report*, through a collaborative interagency process, has included an assessment of U.S. government anti-trafficking efforts in light of the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in persons set forth by the TVPA.

## II. Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons

The TVPA sets forth the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons as follows:

(1) The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.

(2) For the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child incapable of giving meaningful consent, or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death, the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault.

(3) For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.

(4) The government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

The following factors should be considered as indicia of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons:

(1) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates and prosecutes acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and convicts and sentences persons responsible for such acts, that take place wholly or partly within the territory of the country, including, as appropriate, requiring incarceration of individuals convicted of such acts. For purposes of the preceding sentence, suspended or significantly reduced sentences for convictions of principal actors in cases of severe forms of trafficking in persons shall be considered, on a case-by-case basis, whether to be considered as an indicator of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data, consistent with the capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to

have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and on June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.

(2) Whether the government of the country protects victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons and encourages their assistance in the investigation and prosecution of such trafficking, including provisions for legal alternatives to their removal to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship, and ensures that victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked, including by providing training to law enforcement and immigration officials regarding the identification and treatment of trafficking victims using approaches that focus on the needs of the victims.

(3) Whether the government of the country has adopted measures to prevent severe forms of trafficking in persons, such as measures to inform and educate the public, including potential victims, about the causes and consequences of severe forms of trafficking in persons, measures to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration, citizenship, and nationality, measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, a transparent system for remediating or punishing such public officials as a deterrent, measures to prevent the use of forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards, effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information sharing and cooperation arrangements with other countries, and effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruiters and holding them civilly and criminally liable for fraudulent recruiting.

(4) Whether the government of the country cooperates with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of severe forms of trafficking in persons and has entered into bilateral, multilateral, or regional

law enforcement cooperation and coordination arrangements with other countries.

(5) Whether the government of the country extradites persons charged with acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons on substantially the same terms and to substantially the same extent as persons charged with other serious crimes (or, to the extent such extradition would be inconsistent with the laws of such country or with international agreements to which the country is a party, whether the government is taking all appropriate measures to modify or replace such laws and treaties so as to permit such extradition).

(6) Whether the government of the country monitors immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of severe forms of trafficking in persons and whether law enforcement agencies of the country respond to any such evidence in a manner that is consistent with the vigorous investigation and prosecution of acts of such trafficking, as well as with the protection of human rights of victims and the internationally recognized human right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's own country.

(7) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates, prosecutes, convicts, and sentences public officials, including diplomats and soldiers, who participate in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons, including nationals of the country who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, and takes all appropriate measures against officials who condone such trafficking. A government's failure to appropriately address public allegations against such public officials, especially once such officials have returned to their home countries, shall be considered inaction under these criteria. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding such investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data consistent with its resources shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary

has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.

(8) Whether the percentage of victims of severe forms of trafficking in the country that are non-citizens of such countries is insignificant.

(9) Whether the government has entered into effective, transparent partnerships, cooperative arrangements, or agreements that have resulted in concrete and measurable outcomes with

(A) Domestic civil society organizations, private sector entities, or international nongovernmental organizations, or into multilateral or regional arrangements or agreements, to assist the government's efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and punish traffickers; or

(B) the United States toward agreed goals and objectives in the collective fight against trafficking.

(10) Whether the government of the country, consistent with the capacity of such government, systematically monitors its efforts to satisfy the criteria described in paragraphs (1) through (8) and makes available publicly a periodic assessment of such efforts.

(11) Whether the government of the country achieves appreciable progress in eliminating severe forms of trafficking when compared to the assessment in the previous year.

(12) Whether the government of the country has made serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for

(A) commercial sex acts; and

(B) participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country.

### III. Information Sought Relevant to the Minimum Standards

Submissions should include, but need not be limited to, answers to relevant questions below for which the submitter has direct professional experience. Citations to source material should also be provided. Note the country or countries that are the focus of the submission. Please see the *Scope of Interest* section above for detailed information regarding submission requirements.

1. How have trafficking methods and trends changed in the past 12 months? For example, are there victims from new countries of origin? Have new vulnerable groups at risk of human trafficking emerged? Is internal trafficking or child trafficking increasing? Has sex trafficking changed, for example from brothels to private apartments? Is labor trafficking now occurring in additional types of industries or agricultural operations? Is forced begging a problem? Does child sex tourism occur in the country or

involve its nationals abroad, and if so, what are their destination countries?

2. What were the government's major accomplishments in addressing human trafficking?

3. What were the greatest deficiencies in the government's anti-trafficking efforts? What were the limitations on the government's ability to address human trafficking problems in practice?

4. In what ways have the government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons changed in the past year? What new laws, regulations, policies, and implementation strategies exist (e.g., substantive criminal laws and procedures, mechanisms for civil remedies, and victim-witness security, generally and in relation to court proceedings)? Have government policies undermined or otherwise negatively impacted anti-trafficking efforts within that country?

5. Please provide observations regarding the implementation of existing laws, policies, and procedures. Are there laws criminalizing those who knowingly solicit or patronize a trafficking victim to perform a commercial sex act and what are the prescribed penalties?

6. Are the anti-trafficking laws and sentences strict enough to reflect the nature of the crime (e.g., commensurate with crimes such as rape or kidnapping)?

7. Please provide observations on overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts and the efforts of police and prosecutors to pursue trafficking cases. Were any trafficking cases investigated and/or prosecuted, and any traffickers convicted during the reporting period? Is the government equally vigorous in pursuing labor trafficking and sex trafficking? Please note any efforts to investigate and prosecute suspects for knowingly soliciting or patronizing a sex trafficking victim to perform a commercial sex act.

8. Do government officials understand the nature of all forms of trafficking? If not, please provide examples of misconceptions or misunderstandings.

9. Do judges appear appropriately knowledgeable and sensitized to trafficking cases? What sentences have courts imposed upon traffickers? How common are suspended sentences and prison time of less than one year for convicted traffickers? How does this compare to other crimes such as rape and kidnapping?

10. What was the extent of official complicity in trafficking crimes? Were officials, government contractors, or government grantees operating as traffickers (whether subjecting persons to forced labor and/or sex trafficking

offenses) or taking actions that may facilitate trafficking (including accepting bribes to allow undocumented border crossings or suspending active investigations of suspected traffickers, etc.)? Were there examples of trafficking occurring in state institutions (e.g., prisons, child foster homes, institutions for mentally or physically disabled persons)? What proactive measures did the government take to prevent official complicity in trafficking in persons crimes? How did the government respond to reports of complicity that arose during the reporting period? Has the government made efforts to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence complicit officials?

11. Has the government vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced nationals of the country deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate trafficking, including domestic servitude?

12. Has the government investigated, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced members of organized crime groups that are involved in trafficking?

13. Did government officials engage in, support, or otherwise facilitate the unlawful recruitment and use of children in armed forces or security forces? [NOTE: This can include combat roles as well as support roles, but please be specific in this regard if possible.] Did any government-supported organizations or armed groups engage in the unlawful recruitment and use of children in such roles?

14. Please provide observations regarding government efforts to address the issue of unlawful child soldiering. Describe the government's efforts to disarm and demobilize child soldiers, to reintegrate former child soldiers, and to monitor the wellbeing of such children after reintegration.

15. Did the government make a coordinated, proactive effort to identify victims of all forms of trafficking? Did officials effectively coordinate among one another and with relevant nongovernmental organizations to refer victims to care? Is there any screening conducted before deportation or when detaining migrants, including unaccompanied minors, to determine whether individuals were subjected to trafficking? Were such individuals referred for protections services? Does the government also partner with nongovernmental organizations to conduct screenings? What happens if a potential case of human trafficking is identified?

16. What victim services are provided (legal, medical, food, shelter, interpretation, mental health care,

employment, training, etc.)? Who provides these services? If nongovernment organizations provide the services, does the government support their work either financially or otherwise? Are these service providers required to be trained on human trafficking and victim identification?

17. What was the overall quality of victim care? How could victim services be improved? Was government funding for trafficking victim protection and assistance adequate? Are there gaps in access to victim services? Are services available regardless of geographic location within the country? Are services victim-centered and trauma-informed?

18. Are services provided adequately to victims of both labor and sex trafficking? Adults and children, including men and boys? Citizens and noncitizens? LGBTI persons? Persons with disabilities? Were such benefits linked to whether a victim assisted law enforcement or participated in a trial, or whether a trafficker was convicted? Could adult victims leave shelters at will? Could victims seek employment and work while receiving assistance?

19. Do service providers and law enforcement work together cooperatively, for instance to share information about trafficking trends or to plan for services after a raid? What is the level of cooperation, communication, and trust between service providers and law enforcement?

20. Were there means by which victims could obtain restitution from the government or file civil suits against traffickers for restitution, and did this happen in practice? Did prosecutors request restitution in all cases where it was required?

21. How did the government encourage victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking? How did the government protect victims during the trial process? If a victim was a material witness in a court case, was the victim permitted to obtain employment, move freely about the country, or leave the country pending trial proceedings? How did the government work to ensure victims were not re-traumatized during participation in trial proceedings? Can victims provide testimony via video or written statements? Were victims' identities kept confidential as part of such proceedings?

22. Did the government provide, through a formal policy or otherwise, temporary or permanent residency status, or other relief from deportation, for foreign victims of human trafficking who may face retribution or hardship in the countries to which they would be

deported? Were victims given the opportunity to seek legal employment while in this temporary or permanent residency? Were such benefits linked to whether a victim assisted law enforcement, participated in a trial or whether there was a successful prosecution? Does the government repatriate victims who wish to return home? Does the government assist with third country resettlement? Are victims awaiting repatriation or third country resettlement offered services? Are victims indeed repatriated or are they deported?

23. Does the government effectively assist its nationals exploited abroad? Does the government work to ensure victims receive adequate assistance and support for their repatriation while in destination countries? Does the government provide adequate assistance to repatriated victims after their return to their countries of origin, and if so, what forms of assistance?

24. Does the government inappropriately detain or imprison identified trafficking victims? Does the government punish, penalize, or detain trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, such as forgery of documents, illegal immigration, unauthorized employment, prostitution, theft, or drug production or transport? Does law enforcement screen for trafficking victims when arresting individuals in prostitution?

25. What efforts has the government made to prevent human trafficking? Are there laws prohibiting employers or labor agents from confiscating workers' passports or travel documents, switching contracts without the workers' consent, or withholding payment of salaries as a means of keeping workers in a state of compelled service? Are these laws implemented to hold violators accountable and/or are such crimes investigated by law enforcement as potential indicators of trafficking?

26. Do authorities conduct criminal investigations when indicators of trafficking are identified in the context of labor inspections?

27. Does the government operate a hotline for potential victims? If so, how many calls did the hotline receive? What are the hours of operation? What languages are spoken? How many victims were identified as a result of calls to the hotline? Were any investigations initiated as a result of calls to the hotline?

28. Has the government entered into effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information-sharing and cooperation arrangements that have

resulted in concrete and measureable outcomes?

29. Did the government provide assistance to other governments in combating trafficking in persons through trainings or other assistance programs?

30. Does the government have effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruitment, including the activities of recruitment agencies and individual recruiters, both licensed and unlicensed? What efforts did the government make to punish labor recruiters or brokers involved in the recruitment of workers through knowingly fraudulent offers of employment (including misrepresenting wages, working conditions, location, or nature of the job), charging workers of excessive fees for migration or job placement, retention of identity documents with an aim to control job seekers, or recruitment of workers in hazardous or unsafe work? What steps did the government take to minimize the trafficking risks faced by migrant workers departing from or arriving in the country and to raise awareness among potential labor migrants about the risks of human trafficking, legal limits on recruitment fees, or their rights while abroad? What agreements does the government have with either sending or receiving countries of migrant labor regarding safe and responsible recruitment? Are domestic workers (both nationals of the country and foreigners) protected under existing labor laws?

31. What measures has the government taken to reduce the participation by nationals of the country in international and domestic child sex tourism? If any of the country's nationals are perpetrators of child sex tourism, do the country's child sexual abuse laws allow the prosecution of suspected sex tourists for crimes committed abroad?

32. What measures did the government take to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration and issuance of documentation, citizenship, and nationality?

33. Did the government fund any anti-trafficking information, education, or awareness campaigns? Were these campaigns targeting potential trafficking victims and/or the demand for commercial sex or goods produced with forced labor? Does the government provide financial support to nongovernment organizations working to promote public awareness?

34. Were there government policies, regulations, and agreements relating to migration, labor, trade, and investment

that had an impact, positive or negative, on forced labor or sex trafficking or vulnerabilities to such crimes? Please describe how this has impacted anti-trafficking efforts.

35. Please provide additional information and/or recommendations to improve the government's anti-trafficking efforts.

36. Please highlight effective strategies and practices that other governments could consider adopting.

**Joel F. Maybury,**

*Deputy Director, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 2018-26617 Filed 12-7-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4710-17-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

[Docket Number MARAD-2018-0178]

#### **Waiver Request for Aquaculture Support Operations for the 2019 Calendar Year: COLBY PERCE, RONJA CARRIER, SADIE JANE, MISS MILDRED 1**

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to a delegation of authority from the Secretary of Transportation, the Maritime Administrator is authorized to issue waivers allowing documented vessels with registry endorsements or foreign flag vessels to be used in operations that treat aquaculture fish or protect aquaculture fish from disease, parasitic infestation, or other threats to their health when suitable vessels of the United States are not available that could perform those services. A request for such a waiver has been received by the Maritime Administration (MARAD). This notice is being published to solicit comments intended to assist MARAD in determining whether suitable vessels of the United States are available that could perform the required services. If no suitable U.S.-flag vessels are available, the Maritime Administrator may issue a waiver in accordance with USCG regulations on Aquaculture at 46 CFR part 106. A brief description of the proposed aquaculture support service is listed in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before January 9, 2019.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number

MARAD-2018-0178 by any of the following methods:

- *On-line via the Federal Electronic Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search using "MARAD-2018-0178" and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail/Hand-Delivery/Courier:* Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. Submit comments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing.

*Reference Materials and Docket Information:* You may view the complete application, including the aquaculture support technical service requirements, and all public comments at the DOT Docket on-line via <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search using "MARAD-2018-0178." All comments received will be posted without change to the docket, including any personal information provided. The Docket Management Facility is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Bianca Carr, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W23-453, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-9309, Email [Bianca.carr@dot.gov](mailto:Bianca.carr@dot.gov).

If you have questions on viewing the Docket, call Docket Operations, telephone: (800) 647-5527.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** As a result of the enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010, codified at 46 U.S.C. 12102, the Secretary of Transportation has the discretionary authority to issue waivers allowing documented vessels with registry endorsements or foreign flag vessels to be used in operations that treat aquaculture fish for or protect aquaculture fish from disease, parasitic infestation, or other threats to their health when suitable vessels of the United States are not available that could perform those services. The Secretary has delegated this authority to the Maritime Administrator. Pursuant to this authority, MARAD is providing notice of the service requirements proposed by Cooke Aquaculture (Cooke) in order to make a U.S.-flag vessel availability determination. Specifics can be found in Cooke's application letter posted in the docket.

To comply with USCG Aquaculture Support regulations at 46 CFR part 106, Cooke is seeking a MARAD Aquaculture Waiver to operate the vessels, COLBY