

CFR 7.29 will be followed. Only information that is ultimately determined to be confidential under those procedures will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

Privacy Act

Anyone can 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.*). For information on DOT's compliance with the Privacy Act, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

(Authority: 46 U.S.C. 12121, 49 CFR 1.93(a))

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 2026-03582 Filed 2-20-26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD-2026-0200]

Request Notice: Use of Foreign-Built Small Passenger Vessel in United States Coastwise Trade, M/V ALOLKOY

AGENCY: Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by MARAD, is authorized to make determinations regarding the coastwise use of foreign built; certain U.S. built; and U.S. and foreign rebuilt vessels that solely carry no more than twelve passengers for hire. MARAD has received such a determination request and is publishing this notice to solicit comments to assist with determining whether the proposed use of the vessel set forth in the request would have an adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders or U.S. coastwise trade businesses that use U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Information about the requestor's vessel, including a description of the proposed service, is in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

DATES: Submit comments on or before March 25, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD-2026-0200 by any one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search the above DOT Docket Number and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Docket Management Facility is in the West Building, Ground Floor of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Docket Management Facility location address is U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

Note: If you mail or hand-deliver your comments, we recommend that you include the DOT Docket Number, 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.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency name and specific DOT Docket Number. All comments received will be posted without change to the docket at www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided. For detailed instructions on submitting comments, or to submit comments that are confidential in nature, see the section entitled Public Participation. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Patricia Hagerty, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Mail Stop 2, MAR-620, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-5400. Email: smallvessels@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 12121(b), the U.S. Coast Guard may issue a certificate of documentation with a coastwise trade endorsement for eligible, small passenger vessels authorized to carry no more than 12 passengers for hire if MARAD, after notice and an opportunity for public comment, determines the use of the small passenger vessel in the coastwise trade will not adversely affect United States vessel builders or the coastwise trade business of any person that employs vessels built in the United States in that business.¹

MARAD has received an eligibility determination request. Further details about the requester's vessel and its proposed operations may be found in the determination request posted in the

¹ The U.S. Coast Guard and MARAD have authority under 46 U.S.C. 12121(b) through the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, respectively.

DOT Docket Number listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the undue adverse effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or coastwise trade businesses in the U.S. that employ U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Comments should refer to the vessel name, state the commenter's interest in the request, and demonstrate, with supporting documentation, the undue adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders and coastwise trade businesses.

Public Participation

How do I submit comments?

Please submit comments, including the attachments, following the instructions provided under the above heading entitled **ADDRESSES**. It may take a few hours or even days for comments to be reflected on the docket. Comments must be written in English. Provide concise comments and attach additional documents as necessary. There is no limit on the length of the attachments.

Where do I go to read public comments, and find supporting information?

The docket online is located at <https://www.regulations.gov>, keyword search the DOT Docket Number list in the **ADDRESSES** section above or visit the Docket Management Facility (see **ADDRESSES** for hours of operation). Please periodically check the Docket for new submissions and supporting material.

Will my comments be made available to the public?

Yes. Your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, will be made publicly available.

May I submit comments confidentially?

You may request that MARAD treat your comments as commercially confidential by submitting them to SmallVessels@dot.gov. Include in the email subject heading "Contains Confidential Commercial Information" or "Contains CCI" and state in your submission, with specificity, the basis for any such confidential treatment highlighting the CCI portions. If possible, please provide a summary of your submission that can be made available to the public.

If MARAD receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information, procedures described in the Department's FOIA regulation at 49 CFR 7.29 will be followed. Only information that is ultimately determined to be confidential under those procedures will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

Privacy Act

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(Authority: 46 U.S.C. 12121, 49 CFR 1.93(a))

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 2026-03581 Filed 2-20-26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Office of the Secretary**

[Docket No. DOT-OST-2026-0298]

Rural Opportunities To Use Transportation for Economic Success Initiative: Request for Information

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice; request for information.

SUMMARY: DOT's Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) Initiative addresses the transportation infrastructure needs of rural and Tribal communities by developing user-friendly tools and information, aggregating DOT resources, and providing direct technical assistance to connect rural and Tribal communities with the funding, financing, and outreach resources available. This notice requests comments on unmet transportation infrastructure needs in rural communities, barriers that rural communities face in addressing those needs, and opportunities for ROUTES to improve its services and technical assistance to support rural and Tribal stakeholders.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before 60 days from posting of this notice. DOT will consider comments filed after this date to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number above and be submitted by one of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search by using the docket number (provided above). Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the electronic docket site.

- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building Ground Floor, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building Ground Floor, Room PL-401, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket number.

Note: All comments received, including any personal information, will be posted without change to the docket and will be accessible to the public at <http://www.regulations.gov>. You should not include information in your comment that you do not want to be made public. Input submitted online via <http://www.regulations.gov> is not immediately posted to the site. It may take several business days before your submission is posted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Visit <http://www.transportation.gov/rural>, or contact the ROUTES Office at rural@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Rural transportation networks are critical for domestic use and international export, as well as the quality of life for all Americans. Large volumes of freight either originate in rural areas or are transported through rural areas via the nation's highways, railways, airways, waterways, and pipelines to support the American economy. However, rural transportation networks face unique challenges in safety, usage, and condition.¹ Despite only 20 percent of the U.S. population living in rural areas,² rural roads account for 68 percent of our nation's total lane miles, including nearly half of all truck vehicle miles traveled.³ Moreover, 41 percent of all roadway fatalities occur on rural roads, where the fatality rate is 1.54 times higher than on urban roads.⁴ The condition of transportation infrastructure varies between urban and rural areas; for example, rural bridges that are closed or

posted require American travelers to make detours nearly twice as long as those necessitated by their urban counterparts.⁵ Delays can also occur due to trains going over public at-grade crossings—60 percent of which are on rural roads.⁶

In response to these challenges, ROUTES was established in October 2019 with DOT Order 5050.1 and codified in Section 25010 of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* in November 2021 to support the needs of rural America by advancing rural transportation policy. ROUTES addresses rural transportation infrastructure needs by developing user-friendly tools and information, aggregating DOT resources, and providing direct technical assistance to connect rural communities with the funding, financing, and outreach resources available. Specifically, ROUTES is directed to (1) improve analysis of projects from rural and Tribal communities applying for Department grants, including ensuring that project costs, local resources, and the larger benefits to the people and the economy of the United States are appropriately considered; and (2) provide rural and Tribal communities with technical assistance for meeting the transportation infrastructure investment needs of the United States in a financially sustainable manner.

ROUTES is actively engaged with rural and Tribal communities through outreach, technical assistance, and resource and policy development. On November 27, 2019, ROUTES published a notice⁷ requesting information to improve technical assistance for rural stakeholders applying for DOT competitive grant and credit programs. In response to comments received to the notice and other stakeholder feedback regarding grant applications, ROUTES developed the Rural Grant Applicant Toolkit⁸ to increase understanding of DOT competitive grant programs and the Federal funding process. Additionally, ROUTES launched the DOT Competitive Grants Dashboard⁹ to help users determine which grants best suit their transportation infrastructure needs. To address safety concerns raised by stakeholders, ROUTES facilitated

¹ Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Rural Transportation Statistics, March 2025, <https://www.bts.gov/rural>.

² United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates, 2022.

³ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Highway Information Management, Highway Statistics 2022, Table HM-60.

⁴ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. *Rural/urban traffic fatalities: 2023 data* (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 728), June 2025. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, National Bridge Inventory (NBI).

⁶ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration. *Highway-Rail Crossing Handbook, 3rd Edition*. July 2019.

⁷ 84 FR 65459; Docket No. DOT-OST-2019-0167.

⁸ Visit the Rural Grant Applicant Toolkit at <https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit>.

⁹ Visit the DOT Competitive Grants Dashboard at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard>.