

other provision of law shall be construed to require an equal distribution of members representing each entity specified in paragraph (3).

(Added Pub. L. 115-282, title VI, §601(a), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4285.)

**§ 15108. National Towing Safety Advisory Committee**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a National Towing Safety Advisory Committee (in this section referred to as the “Committee”).

(b) **FUNCTION.**—The Committee shall advise the Secretary on matters relating to shallow-draft inland navigation, coastal waterway navigation, and towing safety.

(c) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Committee shall consist of 18 members appointed by the Secretary in accordance with this section and section 15109 of this chapter.

(2) **EXPERTISE.**—Each member of the Committee shall have particular expertise, knowledge, and experience in matters relating to the function of the Committee.

(3) **REPRESENTATION.**—Members of the Committee shall be appointed as follows:

(A) 7 members shall represent the barge and towing industry, reflecting a regional geographic balance.

(B) 1 member shall represent the offshore mineral and oil supply vessel industry.

(C) 1 member shall represent masters and pilots of towing vessels who hold active licenses and have experience on the Western Rivers and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

(D) 1 member shall represent masters of towing vessels in offshore service who hold active licenses.

(E) 1 member shall represent masters of active ship-docking or harbor towing vessels.

(F) 1 member shall represent licensed and unlicensed towing vessel engineers with formal training and experience.

(G) 2 members shall represent port districts, authorities, or terminal operators.

(H) 2 members shall represent shippers and, of the 2, 1 shall be engaged in the shipment of oil or hazardous materials by barge.

(I) 2 members shall represent the general public.

(Added Pub. L. 115-282, title VI, §601(a), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4285.)

**§ 15109. Administration**

(a) **MEETINGS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies shall, at least once each year, meet at the call of the Secretary or a majority of the members of the committee.

(2) **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.**—The committee established under section 15102,<sup>1</sup> shall—

(A) meet in-person, not less frequently than twice each year, at the call of the Sec-

retary of a majority of the members of the committee;

(B) hold additional meetings as necessary;

(C) post the minutes of each meeting of the committee on a publicly available website not later than 2 weeks after the date on which a meeting concludes; and

(D) provide reasonable public notice of any meeting of the committee, and publish such notice in the Federal Register and on a publicly available website.

(b) **EMPLOYEE STATUS.**—A member of a committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies shall not be considered an employee of the Federal Government by reason of service on such committee, except for the purposes of the following:

(1) Chapter 81 of title 5.

(2) Chapter 171 of title 28 and any other Federal law relating to tort liability.

(c) **COMPENSATION.**—Notwithstanding subsection (b), a member of a committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies, when actually engaged in the performance of the duties of such committee, may—

(1) receive compensation at a rate established by the Secretary, not to exceed the maximum daily rate payable under section 5376 of title 5; or

(2) if not compensated in accordance with paragraph (1)—

(A) be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of such duties; or

(B) be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of title 5.

(d) **ACCEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES.**—A member of a committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies may serve on such committee on a voluntary basis without pay without regard to section 1342 of title 31 or any other law.

(e) **STATUS OF MEMBERS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), with respect to a member of a committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies whom the Secretary appoints to represent an entity or group—

(A) the member is authorized to represent the interests of the applicable entity or group; and

(B) requirements under Federal law that would interfere with such representation and that apply to a special Government employee (as defined in section 202(a) of title 18), including requirements relating to employee conduct, political activities, ethics, conflicts of interest, and corruption, do not apply to the member.

(2) **EXCEPTION.**—Notwithstanding subsection (b), a member of a committee established under this chapter or to which this chapter applies shall be treated as a special Government employee for purposes of the committee service of the member if—

(A) the Secretary appointed the member to represent the general public; or

<sup>1</sup> So in original. The comma probably should not appear.