

public affairs sections at U.S. embassies overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Bureau's grants review process.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106-113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by independent external reviewers.

The independent external reviewers, who will be professional, scholarly, or educational experts with appropriate regional and thematic knowledge, will provide recommendations and assessments for consideration by the Bureau. The Bureau will consider for funding only those proposals that are recommended for further consideration by the independent external reviewers.

Proposals will also be reviewed by Department staff as well as by the officers of the Office of the Coordinator of United States Assistance to the New Independent States and the public

diplomacy sections of U.S. Embassies. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Advisor or by other offices of the U.S. Department of State. Funding decisions will be made at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

Review Criteria

All reviewers will use the criteria below to reach funding recommendations and decisions. Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to these criteria, which are not rank-ordered or weighted.

(1) **Broad Significance of Institutional Objectives:** Project objectives should have significant but realistically anticipated ongoing consequences for the participating institutions that will also contribute to the transition of the New Independent States to market economies and democratic societies.

(2) **Clarity and Relevance of Project Objectives to Institutional Needs:** Proposed projects should outline clearly formulated objectives that relate specifically to the needs of the participating institutions.

(3) **Creativity and Feasibility of Project Implementation:** Plan to achieve project objectives should demonstrate the feasibility of doing so during a three-year period by utilizing and reinforcing exchange activities realistically and with creativity.

(4) **Institutional Commitment to Cooperation:** Proposals should demonstrate significant understanding at each institution of its own needs and capacities and of the needs and capacities of its proposed partner(s), together with a strong commitment, during and after the period of grant activity, to cooperate with one another in the mutual pursuit of institutional objectives.

(5) **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should outline a methodology for determining the degree to which a project meets its objectives, both while the project is underway and at its conclusion. The final project evaluation should include an external component and should provide observations about the project's influence within the participating institutions as well as their surrounding communities or societies.

(6) **Cost-effectiveness:** Administrative and program costs should be reasonable and appropriate with cost-sharing provided by all participating institutions within the context of their respective capacities and as a reflection

of their commitment to cooperate with one another in pursuing project objectives. Although indirect costs are eligible for inclusion among costs to be contributed by the applicant, contributions should not be limited to indirect costs.

(7) **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity by explaining how issues of diversity relate to project objectives for all institutional partners and how these issues will be addressed during project implementation. Proposals should also outline the institutional profile of each participating institution with regard to issues of diversity.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures.

Dated: November 1, 2000.

Helena Kane Finn,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[USCG 2000-8229]

Deepwater Capability Replacement Project: Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent and request for public comments; public meeting notice.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces its intent to prepare a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the development of

a proposed action to modernize and replace the aging and technologically obsolete Coast Guard assets required for Deepwater missions. The Deepwater Capability Replacement Project (Deepwater Project) has been initiated to ensure the timely acquisition over the next few decades of appropriate assets for Deepwater missions. The Coast Guard seeks public and agency input on the scope of the PEIS. Specifically, the Coast Guard requests input on any environmental concerns that the public may have related to existing Deepwater assets, the proposal to replace and/or modernize these assets, sources of relevant data or information, and any suggested analysis methods for inclusion in the PEIS.

DATES: Comments must reach the Coast Guard on or before January 19, 2001. Open houses will be held on the following dates:

Oakland, CA, November 27, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Seattle, WA, November 28, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Juneau, AK, November 30, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Cleveland, OH, December 4, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Cambridge, MA, December 5, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Portsmouth, VA, December 7, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 New Orleans, LA, December 11, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Miami, FL, December 12, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 Honolulu, HI, December 14, 2000 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The open houses will be held at the following locations:

Oakland, CA—Marriott at City Center, Room 210, 1001 Broadway
 Seattle, WA—Seattle Center, Shaw Room, Northwest Rooms Building, 305 Harrison Street
 Juneau, AK—Centennial Hall Convention Center, Egan Room, 101 Egan Drive
 Cleveland, OH—Cleveland State University, University Center, Room 364, 2121 Euclid Avenue
 Cambridge, MA—Radisson Hotel, Ballroom, 777 Memorial Drive
 Portsmouth, VA—Tidewater Community College, Waterfront Room, 7000 College Drive
 New Orleans, LA—New Orleans Public Library, Smith Branch, 6301 Canal Blvd
 Miami, FL—West Dade Regional Library, Auditorium, 9445 SW 24th Street
 Honolulu, HI—Honolulu Maritime Center, Pacific Room, Pier 7 Honolulu Harbor

Comments may be submitted in several ways. To make sure your comments and related material are not entered more than once in the docket, please submit them by only one of the following means:

(1) By mail to the Docket Management Facility (USCG-2000-8229), US Department of Transportation, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

(2) By delivery to 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.

(3) By fax to the Docket Management Facility at 202-493-2251.

(4) Electronically through the Web Site for the Docket Management System at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

The Docket Management Facility maintains the public docket for this notice. Comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at Room PL-401, located on the Plaza Level of the Nassif Building at the above address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also view this docket, including this notice and comments, on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions about the project, you may contact LCDR Eric Johnson, Deepwater Environmental & Facilities Planner, by phone at (202) 267-1665 or by e-mail at ejohnson@comdt.uscg.mil or at the Coast Guard's Deepwater EIS Web Page at <http://www.deepwaterEIS.com>. For questions on viewing, or submitting material to the docket, contact Dorothy Beard, Chief, Dockets, DOT, 202-366-9329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Request for Comments

We encourage you to submit comments and related materials on this notice. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this notice (USCG-2000-8229), and the reasons for each comment. You may submit your comments and materials by mail, hand delivery, fax, or electronic means to the Docket Management Facility at the address given under **ADDRESSES**; but please submit your comments and materials by only one means. If you submit them 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 them by mail and would like to

know if they reached the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and materials received during the comment period. For additional information about this notice or the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, contact Joan Lang, Deepwater Project NEPA Coordinator (under contract to the Coast Guard), 202-267-0284, or via email at jiang@comdt.uscg.mil.

Open Houses

The Coast Guard intends to hold open houses at the times and locations listed in **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**. Comments on issues that the public feels should be included in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement will be accepted at these meetings.

Background Information

Deepwater missions are defined as Coast Guard operations that occur at least 50 nautical miles offshore, or require an extended on-scene presence, long transit times to reach the operations area, and/or the forward deployment of forces. The Coast Guard's current Deepwater assets—medium- and high-endurance cutters, fixed and rotary wing aircraft and their supporting command, control and communications systems—are aging and technologically obsolete. The average age of the Coast Guard's Deepwater cutters is 27 years, making this force older than 40 of the world's 42 major naval fleets. While some cutters have received mid-life upgrades, during the next ten to fifteen years all of our assets will reach the end of their projected service life. As a result of this age, Coast Guard assets lack the ability and technology necessary for efficient and effective mission performance.

The Deepwater Project is the Coast Guard's answer, ensuring the timely acquisition of appropriate resources to remedy the aging fleet dilemma and meeting deepwater mission requirements. These Deepwater missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement (MLE, including drug LE, living marine resources LE and alien migrant interdiction), national defense and marine environmental protection. Detailed information about the Project is included in the Appendix to this notice. It may also be found at the Project's web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/deepwater>.

Proposed Action

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Section 102[2][c]), as implemented by the Council on

Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.1C (Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts), and Coast Guard Policy (NEPA: Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1C), the Coast Guard intends to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the Deepwater Project. The purpose of a PEIS is to develop a high-level approach and direction for implementing a broad policy or program. The Deepwater Project meets those criteria.

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider all significant aspects of environmental impacts that may result from a proposed action, to inform the public of potential impacts and alternatives, and to facilitate public involvement in the assessment process. The core of the impact assessment process is the environmental impact statement, or EIS. The EIS must include, among other topics, discussions of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a description of alternatives, and an evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Once an EIS is completed, the lead agency prepares a record of decision (ROD), a legally binding document that identifies the agency's decision including any mitigation measures required to offset impacts.

A programmatic EIS is prepared on a "broad federal action such as the adoption of new agency programs". When preparing a PEIS, the agency may evaluate the program based on common geographic locations, similarities of impacts, or stages of development. Because no site-specific homeporting and bedding down decisions—allocating assets and staff to Coast Guard facilities—will be made during this stage of the project, the PEIS is expected to facilitate and expedite the preparation of subsequent project-specific NEPA documents.

The PEIS will address the general environmental impacts of each of the three alternative systems being considered for replacement of the current Deepwater system, and the no action alternative, while subsequent analyses will address specific implementing actions, such as homeporting new ships and aircraft. Hence, as the first-tier EIS, the PEIS would cover general issues in a broader program-oriented analysis. Subsequent NEPA documentation will concentrate on the issues specific to the action being considered.

The environment to be affected by the proposed action may be the entire

marine and terrestrial coastal region of the continental US, Alaska, Hawaii, the Caribbean, Guam, and the Great Lakes where the Coast Guard has Deepwater facilities, as well as the areas where Deepwater missions are conducted. Deepwater missions are defined as Coast Guard operations that occur at least 50 nautical miles offshore, or require an extended on-scene presence, long transit times to reach the operations area, and/or the forward deployment of forces. The PEIS will discuss the general aspects of the affected environment, such as air quality, water quality, terrestrial and marine vegetation and wildlife, endangered species and their habitat, wetlands, historic and cultural resources, public safety, and land use. The PEIS will compare the potential environmental impacts and benefits that would result from each of the three alternatives and the no action alternative. For the purposes of the PEIS, the location of these assets throughout the country will be designated on a regional level. As required by NEPA, the Coast Guard also will analyze the "no action" alternative as a baseline for comparing the impacts of the proposed project.

The Coast Guard encourages public participation in the PEIS process. Presently, the Coast Guard is conducting a nationwide public scoping process to help identify environmental issues to be addressed in the PEIS. The scoping period will be 45 days starting with publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. The public and agencies will be able to select from a variety of outreach tools to learn about the Deepwater Project. Multiple methods for providing comments will be available, including mail, Internet, and fax. These opportunities will be widely publicized through multiple news media and the Deepwater Project EIS web site at <http://www.DeepwaterEIS.com>. Information on the Coast Guard's Deepwater mission can be found at <http://www.uscg.mil/deepwater>. In addition, the Coast Guard will conduct open houses according to the schedule provided in this **Federal Register** notice (see **DATES**). This process is designed to ensure the public participation process is accessible to all interested parties and that it meets the goal established by Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) by including all affected low-income and minority populations in the public participation process.

In order to obtain maximum public input and participation, the USCG will release all relevant information allowed by law. Some procurement sensitive and other information may be withheld from public documents. To the fullest extent

possible, the USCG will segregate any procurement sensitive information that is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) into an appendix to facilitate public review of the remainder of the NEPA document. If segregation of information exempt from FOIA would leave essentially meaningless material, the USCG will withhold portions of the NEPA document or the entire NEPA document from the public. However, the USCG shall circulate the complete NEPA document including procurement sensitive information withheld from public review, to the USCG decision makers, in accordance with the CEQ, DOT and USCG Regulations.

Following the scoping process, the Coast Guard will prepare a Draft PEIS. Unless the USCG finds that the entire NEPA document must be withheld from public review, a notice of availability will be published in the **Federal Register** and national newspapers when the Draft PEIS is available. Public notices will be mailed or e-mailed to those on the PEIS distribution list. This period will provide the public with an opportunity to review the document and to offer appropriate comments. Public hearings may be held during the review period to capture verbal comments on the Draft PEIS. If public hearings will be held, the time and place of the hearings will be announced in the **Federal Register** and other media.

Unless the USCG finds that the entire NEPA document must be withheld from public review, the comments received during the Draft PEIS review period will be published and made available in the Final PEIS. A notice of availability of the Final PEIS will be published in the **Federal Register** and in other public notices. NEPA provides for a 30-day comment period after publication of the Final PEIS, during which the public may comment on the adequacy of responses to comments and the Final PEIS. After that time, a ROD detailing the Coast Guard's decision identifying the selected alternative will be prepared and published in the **Federal Register**. The entire ROD will be available for public review regardless of whether parts or all of the DEIS and FEIS must be withheld from the public.

Dated: November 3, 2000.

R.J. Casto,

RADM, USCG, Assistant Commandant for Acquisition.

Appendix

The Coast Guard Deepwater Capabilities Replacement Project

The Coast Guard operates in inland, coastal, and Deepwater maritime regions.

Deepwater missions are defined as operations that occur at least 50 nautical miles offshore, or require an extended on-scene presence, long transit times to reach the operations area, and/or the forward deployment of forces. Deepwater missions typically require Coast Guard personnel to be involved in long-term, continuous missions, often with deployments away from home stations for several months on end. These missions may also take place in severe environments from arctic to tropical, 24 hours a day, wherever the Coast Guard's presence is required.

Overall, the Coast Guard performs fourteen statutorily mandated missions in the Deepwater regions around the globe. These fall into four main categories: Maritime Law Enforcement; Maritime Safety; National Defense; and Marine Environmental Protection.

Maritime Law Enforcement includes: Living marine resources enforcement, drug interdiction, alien migrant interdiction and general law enforcement.

Maritime Safety includes: Search and rescue (SAR) and the International Ice Patrol.

National Defense includes: General defense operations, maritime intercept operations, deployed port security and defense operations, environmental defense operations, and peacetime military engagement.

Marine Environmental Protection includes: Maritime pollution enforcement and response, lightering zone enforcement and foreign vessel inspection.

In 1999, an Interagency Task Force on United States Coast Guard Roles and Missions was appointed to "provide advice and recommendations regarding the appropriate roles and missions for the Coast Guard through the year 2020," with special attention to the Deepwater missions. The Task Force's findings affirmed that the Coast Guard must remain a military, multi-mission, maritime service in the 21st century to meet national policies and statutory mandates. The Task Force further recommended that the Coast Guard forces possess inherent operational flexibility and adaptability, including the ability to operate alongside the forces and personnel of other US armed services, US civilian agencies, and nations. In addition, the Coast Guard must strive to be cost effective across all missions.

The Coast Guard's Deepwater ships and aircraft (assets) are aging and technologically obsolete. This equipment was originally acquired from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s. The average age of the Deepwater cutters is 27 years old, making this force older than 36 of the world's 41 major naval fleets. Although some cutters received upgrades, during the next 10 years these cutters will reach the ends of their projected service lives.

Consequently, Deepwater assets lack fundamental capabilities and technologies necessary for efficient and effective mission performance. Examples include poor sensors and night operations capability, inadequate communication systems among Coast Guard units and forces of other services, agencies and navies of other countries. In addition, antiquated technology increases operating and maintenance hours and costs, placing

greater demands on the logistics infrastructure.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[USCGD08-00-025]

Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Committee (LMRWSAC) will meet to discuss various issues relating to navigational safety on the Lower Mississippi River and related waterways. The meeting will be open to the public.

DATES: LMRWSAC will meet on Thursday, December 7, 2000, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. This meeting may close early if all business is finished. Written material and requests to make oral presentations should reach the Coast Guard on or before November 20, 2000. Requests to have a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee should reach the Coast Guard on or before November 20, 2000.

ADDRESSES: LMRWSAC will meet at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA Hall D, Room 338 during the International Workboat Show. Send written material and requests to make oral presentations to LT(jg), Zeita Merchant, Committee Administrator, c/o Commanding Officer, Marine Safety New Orleans, 1615 Poydras Steet, New Orleans, LA 70112. This notice is available on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For questions on this notice, contact LT(jg) Zeita Merchant, Committee Administrator, telephone (504) 589-4222, Fax (504) 589-4241.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

Agenda of Meeting

Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Committee (LMRWSAC)

The agenda includes the following:

- (1) Introduction of committee members.
- (2) Election of Committee Chairman & Vice Chairman
- (3) Remarks by RADM P. Pluta, Committee Sponsor.

(a). Establishment of a working group to develop strategic planning to guide LMRWSAC.

(4) Approval of the April 26, 2000 minutes.

(5) Old Business:

Captain of the Port status report

VTs update report

PORTS update report

River crossing dredging ranges side markings

(6) New Business:

(7) Next meeting.

(8) Adjournment.

Procedural

The meeting is open to the public. Please note that the meeting may close early if all business is finished. At the Chair's discretion, members of the public may make oral presentations during the meeting. If you would like to make an oral presentation at the meeting, please notify the Committee Administrator no later than November 20, 2000. Written material for distribution at the meeting should reach the Coast Guard no later than November 20, 2000. If you would like a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee or subcommittee in advance of the meeting, please submit 30 copies to the Committee Administrator at the location indicated under Addresses no later than November 20, 2000.

Information on Services for Individuals with Disabilities

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities, or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact the Committee Administrator at the location indicated under Addresses as soon as possible.

Dated: October 16, 2000.

Paul J. Pluta,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District.

[FR Doc. 00-28701 Filed 11-8-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Public Notice For Waiver of Aeronautical Land-use Assurance Lawrence Municipal Airport, North Andover, Massachusetts

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Request for Public Comments. Notice of Intent to Waiver with respect to land.