

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**[Public Notice 3981]****Notice of Meetings of the United States International Telecommunication Advisory Committee; ITU Council Agenda**

The Department of State announces a meeting of the U.S. International Telecommunication Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Department on policy and technical issues with respect to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

- The ITAC will meet to debrief the just-completed ITU Council meeting from 2 to 4 on May 21, 2002 at the Department of State in room 1408.

Persons intending to attend the meeting should send a fax to (202) 647-7407 not later than 24 hours before the meeting. On this fax, please include the name of the meeting, your name, social security number, date of birth and organization. One of the following valid photo identifications will be required for admittance: U.S. driver's license with your picture on it, U.S. passport, or U.S. Government identification (company ID's are no longer accepted by Diplomatic Security). Directions to the meeting location and on which entrance to use may be determined by calling the ITAC Secretariat at (202) 647-2592 or email to worsleydm@state.gov. Attendees may join in the discussions, subject to the instructions of the Chair. Admission of participants will be limited to seating available.

Dated: April 30, 2002.

Cecily C. Holiday,

*Director, Telecommunication Development,
Department of State.*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Maritime Administration****Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA)**

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of open season for enrollment in fiscal year (FY) 2003 VISA Program.

Introduction

The VISA program was established pursuant to section 708 of the Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended (DPA), which provides for voluntary agreements for emergency preparedness programs. VISA was approved for a two

year term on January 30, 1997, and published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 1997, (62 FR 6837). Approval was extended through February 13, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on February 20, 2001 (66 FR 10938).

As implemented, VISA is open to U.S.-flag vessel operators of militarily useful vessels, including bareboat charter operators if satisfactory signed agreements are in place committing the assets of the owner to the bareboat charterer for purposes of VISA. While tug/barge operators must own or bareboat charter barges committed to the VISA program, it is not required that these operators commit tug service through bareboat charter or ownership arrangements. Time charters of U.S.-flag tugs will satisfy commitments to the VISA program. By order of the Maritime Administrator on August 4, 1997, participation of U.S.-flag deepwater tug/barge operators in VISA was encouraged. Voyage, and space charterers are not considered U.S.-flag vessel operators for purposes of VISA eligibility.

VISA Concept

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.

VISA provides for the staged, time-phased availability of participants' shipping services/systems to meet contingency requirements through prenegotiated contracts between the Government and participants. Such arrangements are jointly planned with the Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), and participants in peacetime to allow effective and best valued use of commercial sealift capacity, to provide DOD assured contingency access, and to minimize commercial disruption, whenever possible.

VISA Stages I and II provide for prenegotiated contracts between the 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 will provide for additional capacity to the DOD when Stage 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.

FY 2003 VISA Enrollment Open Season

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 participate in the program for FY 2003 (October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003). Current participants in the VISA program are not required to apply for FY 2003 reenrollment, as VISA participation will be automatically extended for FY 2003. This is the fifth annual enrollment period since the commencement of the VISA program. The annual enrollment was initiated because VISA has been fully integrated into DOD's priority for award of cargo to VISA participants. It is necessary to link the VISA enrollment cycle with DOD's peacetime cargo contracting cycle.

New VISA applicants are required to submit their applications for the FY 2003 VISA program as described in this Notice no later than May 31, 2001. This alignment of VISA enrollment and eligibility for VISA priority will solidify the linkage between commitment of contingency assets by VISA participants and receiving VISA priority consideration for the award of FY 2003 DOD peacetime cargo.

This is the only planned enrollment period for carriers to join VISA and derive benefits for DOD peacetime contracts during FY 2003. 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

Because enrollment of carriers in VISA provides the DOD with assured access to sealift services during contingencies based on a level of commitment, as well as a mechanism for joint planning, the DOD awards peacetime cargo contracts to VISA participants on a priority basis. This applies to liner trades and charter contracts alike. 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.