

actions normally requiring an EIS through the point where project scoping has been completed. Following project scoping, RUS will make a judgment to have an EA prepared or contract for the preparation of an EIS.

■ 13. Section 1794.51(a) is revised to read as follows:

§ 1794.51 Preparation for scoping.

(a) As soon as practicable after RUS and the applicant have developed a schedule for the environmental review process, RUS shall have its notice of intent to prepare an EA or EIS and schedule scoping meetings (§ 1794.13) published in the **Federal Register** (see 40 CFR 1508.22). The applicant shall have published, in a timely manner, a notice similar to RUS' notice.

* * * * *

■ 14. Section 1794.52(d) is amended by removing the last sentence and adding two new sentences at the end of the paragraph to read as follows:

§ 1794.52 Scoping meetings.

* * * * *

(d) * * * The applicant or its consultant shall prepare a record of the scoping meeting. The record shall consist of a transcript when a traditional meeting format is used or a summary report when an open house format is used.

* * * * *

■ 15. Section 1794.53 is revised to read as follows:

§ 1794.53 Environmental report.

(a) After scoping procedures have been completed, RUS shall require the applicant to develop and submit an ER. The ER shall be prepared under the supervision and guidance of RUS staff and RUS shall evaluate and be responsible for the accuracy of all information contained therein.

(b) The applicant's ER will normally serve as the RUS EA. After RUS has reviewed and found the ER to be satisfactory, the applicant shall provide RUS with a sufficient number of copies of the ER to satisfy the RUS distribution plan.

(c) The ER shall include a summary of the construction and operation monitoring and mitigation measures for the proposed action. These measures may be revised as appropriate in response to comments and other information, and shall be incorporated by summary or reference into the FONSI.

■ 16. Section 1794.54 is revised to read as follows:

§ 1794.54 Agency determination.

Following the scoping process and the development of a satisfactory ER by the applicant or its consultant that will serve as the agency's EA, RUS shall determine whether the proposed action is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. If RUS determines the action is significant, RUS will continue with the procedures in subpart G of this part. If RUS determines the action is not significant, RUS will proceed in accordance with §§ 1794.42 through 1794.44. For proposals subject to the procedures of subpart F, RUS shall publish notices in the **Federal Register** that announce the availability of the EA and solicit public comments on the EA (refer to § 1794.42) and the RUS finding and the availability of the EA and FONSI (refer to § 1794.43).

§ 1794.61 [Amended]

■ 17. Section 1794.61 is amended by:

■ A. Removing paragraph (b).

■ B. Removing the heading *General* from paragraph (a); redesignating paragraph (a) as the introductory text; paragraph (a)(1) as (a); paragraph (a)(2) as (b); and paragraph (a)(3) as (c).

Dated: July 11, 2003.

Hilda Gay Legg,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 03-19619 Filed 7-31-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

15 CFR Part 911

[Docket No.: 030220035-3035-01]

RIN 0648-AQ55

Policies and Procedures Concerning Use of the NOAA Space-Based Data Collection Systems

AGENCY: National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule amends the regulations setting forth policies and procedures regarding space-based data collection systems (DCS) to allow expanded use of the NOAA DCS for government interests and to permit greater flexibility in utilizing these vital U.S. data collection assets in support of homeland security, National security,

law enforcement, and humanitarian operations.

DATES: Effective September 2, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Copies of supporting documents may be obtained from Kay Metcalf, NOAA, NESDIS, Direct Services Division, E/SP3, Room 3320, FB-4, 5200 Auth Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746-4304.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kay Metcalf at (301) 457-5681, e-mail: Kay.Metcalf@noaa.gov; or Glenn Tallia at 301-713-1337, e-mail: Glenn.E.Tallia@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NOAA enacted 15 CFR part 911, effective June 5, 1998, to revise its policies and procedures for authorizing the use of the space-based DCS that operate on NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES) and on its Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellites (POES). For general background on NOAA DCS, refer to the notice of final rulemaking published in the **Federal Register** on May 6, 1998, at 63 FR 24917.

The background and rationale for the revisions to the DCS regulations were provided in the preamble to the proposed rule published in the **Federal Register** on April 8, 2003, at 68 FR 16993, and are not repeated here.

NOAA received no comments on the proposed rule and, therefore, is adopting the proposed rule as a final rule without change.

Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as that term is defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.* The factual basis for this certification was published in the proposed rule and is not repeated here. No comments were received regarding the economic impact of this rule. As a result, no final regulatory flexibility analysis was prepared.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (35 U.S.C. 3500 et seq.)

This rule contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and which have been approved by OMB under control number 0648-0157. Public reporting burden for these requirements is estimated to average 3 hours per GOES agreement and 1 hour per Argos agreement, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching

existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate, or any other aspect of this data collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to NESDIS (see **ADDRESSES**) and to OMB at the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503 (Attention: NOAA Desk Officer).

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)

Publication of the final regulations does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Executive Order 12866

This rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

Gregory W. Withee,

Assistant Administrator for Satellite and Information Services, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department of Commerce.

List of Subjects in 15 CFR Part 911

Scientific equipment, Space transportation and exploration.

■ For the reasons set out in the preamble, 15 CFR Part 911 is amended as follows:

■ 1. The authority citation for Part 911 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 313, 49 U.S.C. 44720; 15 U.S.C. 1525; 7 U.S.C. 450b; 5 U.S.C. 552.

■ 2. Section 911.3 is amended by revising paragraphs (p), (q), (r), and (s) and adding paragraph (t) to read as follows:

§ 911.3 Definitions.

* * * * *

(p) *Sensitive use* means the use of the NOAA DCS where the users' requirements dictate the use of a governmental system such as National security, homeland security, law

enforcement and humanitarian operations.

(q) *Testing use* means the use of the NOAA DCS by manufacturers of platforms for use in conjunction with the NOAA DCS, for the limited purpose of testing and certifying the compatibility of new platforms with the technical requirements of the NOAA DCS.

(r) *User* means the entity and/or organization that owns or operates user platforms for the purpose of collecting and transmitting data through the NOAA DCS, or the organization requiring the collection of the data.

(s) *User platform* means device designed in accordance with the specifications delineated and approved by the Approving Authority used for the in-situ collection and subsequent transmission of data via the NOAA DCS. Those devices which are used in conjunction with the GOES DCS are referred to as data collection platforms (DCP) and those which are used in conjunction with the Argos DCS are referred to as Platform Transmitter Terminals (PTT). For purposes of these regulations, the terms "user platform," "DCP", and "PTT" are interchangeable.

(t) *User requirement* means the requirement expressed and explained in the System Use Agreement.

■ 3. Section 911.4 is amended by revising paragraphs (c)(3) and (c)(4) to read as follows:

§ 911.4 Use of the NOAA Data Collection Systems.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(3) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(4) of this section, non-environmental use of the NOAA DCS is only authorized for government use and non-profit users where there is a government interest. The NOAA DCS will continue to be predominantly used for environmental applications. Non-environmental use of the system shall be limited to sensitive use, and to episodic use as defined below in paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(4) Episodic use of the NOAA DCS may also be authorized in specific instances where there is a significant possibility for loss of life. Such use shall be closely monitored.

* * * * *

■ 4. Section 911.5 is amended by revising paragraphs (c) and (e)(1), and adding new paragraphs (e)(3) and (e)(4) to read as follows:

§ 911.5 NOAA Data Collection Systems Use Agreements.

* * * * *

(c) The Director shall evaluate user requests for System Use Agreements and renewals and conclude agreements for use of the NOAA DCS.

* * * * *

(e) * * *

(1) Agreements for the collection of environmental data, by the GOES DCS, shall be valid for 5 years from the date of initial in-situ deployment, and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods.

* * * * *

(3) Agreements for the collection of non-environmental data, via the GOES DCS, by government agencies, or non-profit institutions where there is a government interest, shall be valid for 1 year from the date of initial *in-situ* deployment of the platforms, and may be renewed for additional 1-year periods.

(4) Agreements for the episodic collection of non-environmental data, via the GOES DCS under § 911.4(c)(4), shall be of short, finite duration not to exceed 1 year without exception, and usually shall not exceed 6 months. These agreements shall be closely monitored and shall not be renewed.

■ 5. Section 911.6 is revised to read as follows:

§ 911.6 Treatment of data.

(a) All NOAA DCS users must agree to permit NOAA and other agencies of the U.S. Government the full, open, timely, and appropriate use as determined by NOAA, of all environmental data collected from their platforms; this may include the international distribution of environmental data under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization.

(b) Raw data from the NOAA space segment is openly transmitted and accessible.

(c) Accessibility of the NOAA DCS processed data from the ground segment is handled in accordance with the users specifications and system design limitations, subject to the provisions stated in paragraph (a) of this section.

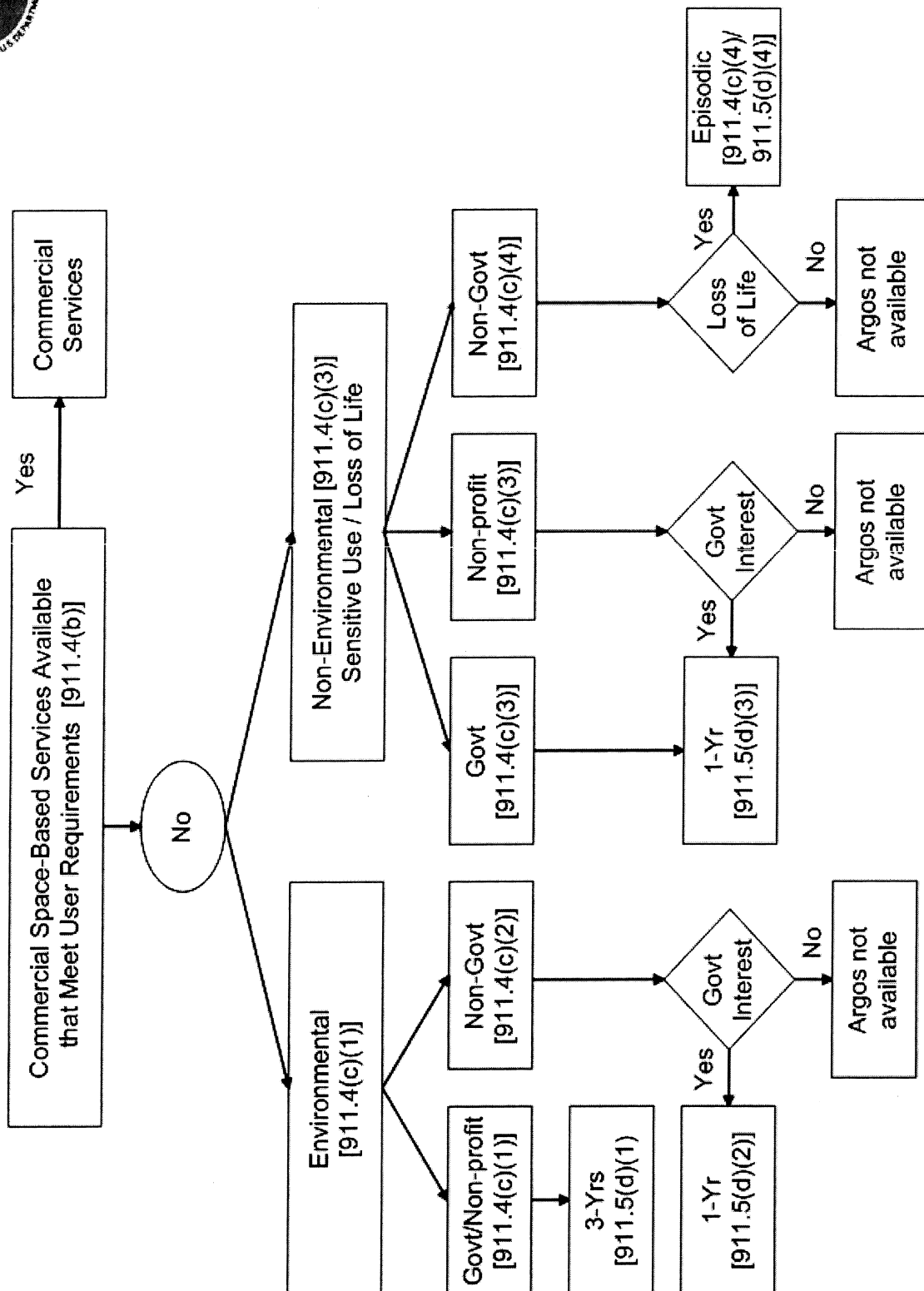
■ 6. Revise appendix A to part 911 as follows:

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Appendix A to Part 911 - Argos DCS Use Policy Diagram

Argos DCS Use Policy Diagram

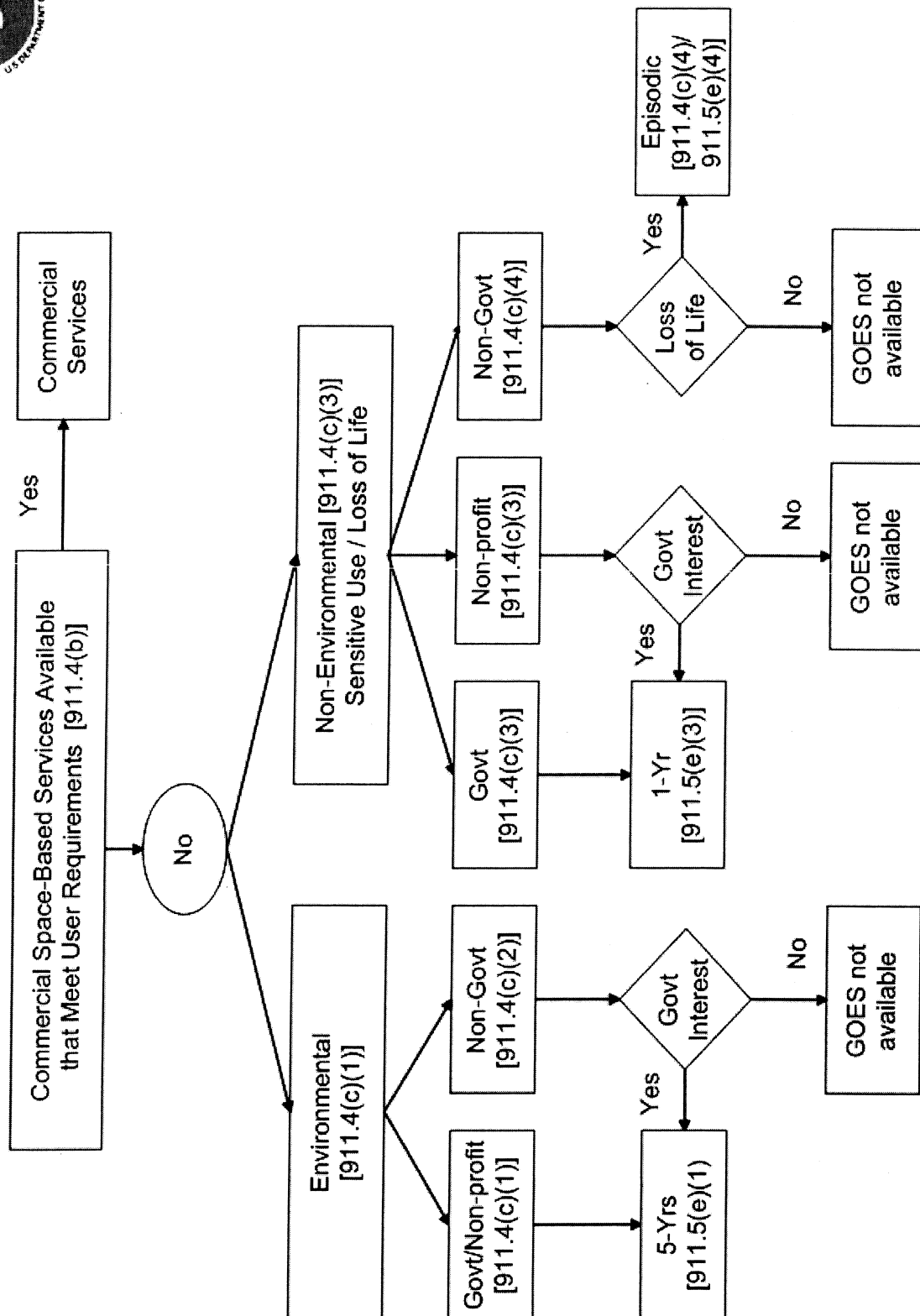


Note: Testing Use permitted as per [911.4(c)(5)] for up to 1-Yr [911.5(d)(5)] Appendix A



Appendix B to Part 911 - GOES DCS Use Policy Diagram

GOES DCS Use Policy Diagram



Note: Testing Use permitted as per [911.4(c)(5)] for up to 1-Yr [911.5(e)(2)] Appendix A

[FR Doc. 03-19478 Filed 7-31-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-HP-C

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 165

[CGD05-03-102]

RIN 1625-AA00

Safety and Security Zones; Chesapeake Bay, Maryland and Tributaries

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing moving and fixed safety and security zones on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries for vessels carrying Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in the Captain of the Port (COTP) Baltimore zone. These zones are necessary to provide for the safety and security of these vessels in response to potential terrorist acts. This rule enhances public and maritime safety and security by requiring vessel traffic to maintain a safe distance from these vessels while they are transiting, anchored, or moored in the COTP Baltimore zone.

DATES: This rule is effective from 8 a.m. local time on July 24, 2003 through August 20, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents indicated in this preamble as being available in the docket, are part of docket CGD05-03-102 and are available for inspection or copying at Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Activities, 2401 Hawkins Point Road, Building 70, Port Safety, Security and Waterways Management Branch, Baltimore, Maryland, 21226-1791, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lieutenant Charles Bright, at Coast Guard Activities Baltimore, Port Safety, Security and Waterways Management Branch, at telephone number (410) 576-2676 or (410) 576-2693.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulatory Information

On March 20, 2003, we published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) entitled "Safety and Security Zones; Chesapeake Bay, Maryland and Tributaries" in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 13649). We received no letters

commenting on the proposed rule. No public hearing was requested, and none was held.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**. The final rule was published in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 43309) on July 22, 2003, but is not effective until August 21, 2003. However, imminent arrival of affected vessels creates an immediate need for this temporary rule until the final rule becomes effective.

Background and Purpose

In light of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center buildings in New York, NY and the Pentagon in Arlington, VA on September 11, 2001, safety and security zones are being established to safeguard certain types of vessels and the public from sabotage or other subversive acts, accidents, or other events of a similar nature, and to protect persons, vessels, and others in the maritime community from the hazards associated with the transit and limited maneuverability of these vessels. These safety and security zones prohibit entry into or movement within the specified areas.

This rule establishes safety and security zones around vessels carrying LNG while underway, anchored, or moored in the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. This rule creates safety and security zones within navigable waters of the United States in the COTP Baltimore zone, as defined in 33 CFR 3.25-15. While the COTP anticipates some impact on vessel traffic due to this regulation, these safety and security zones are deemed necessary for the protection of life, property, and the safety and security of navigation within the COTP Baltimore zone.

Regulatory Evaluation

This rule is not a "significant regulatory action" under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, and does not require an assessment of potential costs and benefits under section 6(a)(3) of that Order. The Office of Management and Budget has not reviewed it under that Order. It is not "significant" under the regulatory policies and procedures of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

We expect the economic impact of this proposed rule to be so minimal that a full Regulatory Evaluation under the regulatory policies and procedures of DHS is unnecessary. This finding is based on the limited size of the zones, the minimal time that vessels will be restricted from the zones, and vessels

may transit around the zones. In addition, vessels that may need to enter the zones may request permission on a case-by-case basis from the COTP Baltimore or his designated representatives.

Small Entities

Under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601-612), we have considered whether this rule would have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The term "small entities" comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000.

The Coast Guard certifies under 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. This rule would affect the following entities, some of which might be small entities: the owners or operators of vessels intending to transit in a portion of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries near a vessel encompassed by the safety and security zones. Because the zones are of limited size and duration, it is expected that there will be minimal disruption to the maritime community. In addition, smaller vessels, which are more likely to be small entities, may transit around the zones and request permission from the COTP Baltimore on a case-by-case basis to enter the zones.

Assistance for Small Entities

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-121), we offered to assist small entities in understanding the rule so that they could better evaluate its effects on them and participate in the rulemaking process. If the rule would affect your small business and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Small businesses may send comments on the actions of Federal employees who enforce, or otherwise determine compliance with, Federal regulations to the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards. The Ombudsman evaluates these actions annually and rates each agency's responsiveness to small business. If you wish to comment on actions by employees of the Coast Guard, call 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247).