

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Request for Comments**

We encourage you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments and related material. We encourage comments on whether a regulated navigation area is the appropriate tool to provide for the safe navigation of tows transiting through the draws of the Jefferson Street bridge on the Des Plaines River in the vicinity of Joliet, Illinois. If you do so, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this rulemaking (CGD09-03-214), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and related material in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying. If you would like to know they reached us, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. We may change this proposed rule in view of them.

Public Meeting

We do not now plan to hold a public meeting. But you may submit a request for a meeting by writing to Marine Safety Office Chicago at the address under **ADDRESSES** explaining why one would be beneficial. If we determine that one would aid this rulemaking, we will hold one at a time and place announced by a later notice in the **Federal Register**.

Regulatory Information

We did not publish a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for this regulation. Under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for not publishing an NPRM, and under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**. On May 2, 2003, a tow allided with the pier of the Jefferson Street Bridge which resulted in substantial damage to the bridge structure. As a result, it is estimated that the bridge will be inoperable for 4 to 6 months while repairs are made. The Captain of the Port Chicago believes that immediate action is necessary to help prevent any future allisions with the pier. Further, additional allisions might result in total structural failure, closure of the river for a period of time as a result of an allision, and the possible loss of life as a result of another allision.

Background and Purpose

On May 2, 2003, a southbound tow allided with the pier of the Jefferson Street bridge. This allision resulted in significant structural damage to the bridge pier. Southbound tows with a 3 by 5 configuration, transiting under the Cass Street Bridge and then the Jefferson Street Bridge, only have 100 feet of horizontal maneuvering room. In addition, the Des Plaines River regularly has significant current in this area.

In order to prevent future allisions, a regulated navigation area (RNA) is being established from the Ruby Street Bridge to the McDonough Street Bridge in which southbound tows in a 3 by 5 configuration must use an assist tug. This RNA is being established until an adequate protection cell is constructed around the bridge pier.

Discussion of Rule

Southbound tows greater than 89 feet in overall width and more than 800 feet in length must use an assist tug when transiting through the RNA. This RNA encompasses the Des Plaines River from mile 288.7 (the Ruby Street Bridge), to mile 287.3 (the McDonough Street Bridge). Deviation from this rule is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District or his designated representative. His designated representative is the Captain of the Port Chicago.

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. The operational reporting requirements of the RNA are minimal and necessary to provide immediate, improved security for the public, vessels, and U.S. ports and waterways. The requirements do not alter normal barge cargo loading operations or transits. Additionally, this rule is temporary in nature and the Coast Guard may issue a NPRM as it considers whether to make this rule permanent. The minimal hardships that may be experienced by persons or vessels are necessary to the national interest in protecting the public, vessels, and vessel crews from the devastating consequences of acts of terrorism, and from sabotage or other subversive acts,

accidents, or other causes of a similar nature.

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 will affect the following entities, some of which may be small entities: The operators of southbound tows, in a 3 by 5 configuration, intending to transit through the RNA. This RNA will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because this rule will only remain in effect until a protection cell can be erected or until other recommendations are provided which reduce the risk of allisions with the Jefferson Street Bridge.

If you think that your business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction qualifies as a small entity and that this rule would have a significant economic impact on it, please submit a comment (*see* **ADDRESSES**) explaining why you think it qualifies and how and to what degree this rule would economically affect it.

Assistance for Small Entities

Under subsection 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 can better evaluate its effects on them and participate in the rulemaking process. 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).

Collection of Information

This rule calls for no new collection of information under the Paperwork