

Proposed Deepwater Port Background Information

The proposed Energy Bridge GOM Deepwater Port would deliver natural gas to the United States Gulf Coast using existing gas supply and gathering systems in the Gulf of Mexico and Louisiana. Gas would then be delivered to shippers using the national pipeline grid through interconnections with major interstate and intrastate pipelines.

The project would consist of a Submerged Turret Loading (STL) system that would be comprised of a submerged turret buoy; chains, lines, and anchors; a flexible riser; and a subsea manifold. A 20-inch seabed pipeline would be constructed as part of the project.

Liquified natural gas (LNG) would be transported on an El Paso Energy Bridge Vessel (EPEBV) from various sources worldwide. When the EPEBV, a conventional LNG tanker fitted with regasification equipment on board the vessel, reached the location of the Deepwater Port, it would retrieve and connect to the STL system. The submerged buoy would be raised from its subsurface location, and drawn into an opening in the hull of the vessel. After the buoy was attached to the vessel, the on-board LNG regasification process would commence. The gas would then be discharged through the buoy into the subsea flexible riser, to the manifold, and finally to the pipeline which would enable additional natural gas supplies to enter key domestic markets in the United States.

License Application Background Information

The Energy Bridge GOM Deepwater Port license application was submitted to the Secretary of Transportation on December 20, 2002. The license application calls for construction of the Energy Bridge GOM Deepwater Port in an area situated in the Central Area of the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 106 miles south of the Louisiana coastline, in West Cameron Area, South Addition, Block 603 (WC603). Additional information concerning the contents of the application can be found online at <http://dms.dot.gov> under docket number USCG-2003-14294, or in the notice of application published in the **Federal Register** at 68 FR 3299 (January 23, 2003). This public hearing is being held pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 1504(g) to receive information relevant to the issuance or denial of the requisite federal license for the proposed Energy Bridge GOM Deepwater Port project.

Procedural

Any person who wishes may appear and speak or present evidence at this

public hearing. Persons planning to speak at the hearing should contact the U.S. Coast Guard as indicated in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, any time prior to the hearing, indicating the approximate amount of time required. Written statements and exhibits may be submitted in place of or in addition to oral statements and will be made a part of the hearing record. Written statements and exhibits may be delivered before or during the hearing, or they may be submitted for up to 45 days following the date of the hearing to the Docket Management Facility listed under **ADDRESSES**.

Joseph J. Angelo,

Director of Standards, Marine Safety, Security, and Environmental Protection, Coast Guard.

Raymond R. Barberisi,

Director, Office of Ports and Domestic Shipping, U.S. Maritime Administration.
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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

[USCG-2003-16010]

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships, Annex IV—International Sewage Pollution Prevention Equivalency Documentation

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of policy.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces that on September 27, 2003, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78), (revised) Annex IV will enter into force internationally. The United States is not a Party to MARPOL 73/78, Annex IV, however, U.S. flagged vessels visiting nations that are parties may need to demonstrate compliance with these MARPOL regulations on the prevention of pollution by sewage from ships. The Coast Guard plans to assist qualified U.S. flag vessels in demonstrating compliance with these MARPOL requirements by issuing a document certifying equivalent compliance with the revised Annex IV of MARPOL 73/78. Failure of a United States flagged vessel to have the appropriate certificate or a document stating shipboard equivalency to MARPOL 73/78, Annex IV could result in a port state detention abroad.

DATES: The MARPOL 73/78, Annex IV international requirements come into force September 27, 2003, for new ships built on or after September 27, 2003. For existing vessels, these MARPOL international requirements come into force September 27, 2008.

ADDRESSES: For new vessels, requests for documentation certifying equivalent compliance with the revised Annex IV of MARPOL 73/78 should be sent to the local Officer-in-Charge, Marine Inspection. This notice and documents mentioned in this notice as being available in the docket, are part of docket USCG-2003-16010 and are available for inspection or copying at the Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also find this docket on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions regarding this notice, you may call, fax, or e-mail Lieutenant Commander Brian Downey, Office of Compliance, (G-MOC-1): telephone 202-267-2735, fax 202-267-4394, e-mail BDowney@comdt.uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Starting September 27, 2003, certain U.S. flagged vessels visiting nations that are a party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78), Annex IV (Sewage) ("MARPOL 73/78, Annex IV") may need to demonstrate compliance with MARPOL 73/78, (revised) Annex IV—regulations on the prevention of pollution by sewage from ships.

The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) has agreed to revisions to Annex IV. MEPC of IMO has asked Annex IV Parties to implement the revised Annex IV immediately on the entry into force of the existing Annex to avoid the creation of a dual treaty regime between the existing and the revised Annex IV.

Applicability

The MARPOL 73/78, (revised) Annex IV applies to all new vessels built on or after September 27, 2003, that are 400 Gross Tons (GT), International Tonnage Convention (ITC), or more and new vessels less than 400 GT ITC that are certified to carry more than 15 passengers. The Annex does not require existing vessels within these tonnage and passenger categories to comply until September 27, 2008. A copy of the text of the MARPOL 73/78, (revised) Annex IV, and a related MEPC circular