

activities are conducted by highly trained personnel certified by FMCSA or by State or local governments. To the extent that implementation of the certification process increases the government's ability to identify potentially unsafe carriers and vehicles and remove them from the Nation's roads, it would have positive, if minimal, effects on air quality, noise levels, and public safety. Accordingly, FMCSA anticipates that implementation of the Certification rule would produce a net positive impact on the quality of the human environment. The agency's full Environmental Assessment is available in this docket.

As noted in the Background section of this document, the 2002 and 2003 DOT Appropriations Acts made issuance of the Certification rule a precondition to FMCSA's expenditure of funds on the processing of Mexico-domiciled motor carrier applications for authority to operate beyond the border commercial zones. Nevertheless, the EA does not attempt to analyze the prospective environmental impacts of Mexico-domiciled carriers operating in the United States. This is because the environmental analysis of such operations, in the form of a PEIS and General Conformity Evaluation required by the Ninth Circuit decision, is already being undertaken with respect to two other rules discussed above (establishing application and safety monitoring procedures for Mexico-domiciled carriers) that are preconditions to the processing of applications of Mexican carriers for beyond-the-border-commercial-zones operating authority. Unless the Ninth Circuit decision is reversed or the relevant terms of the DOT Appropriations Acts are not extended, FMCSA cannot process applications of Mexico-domiciled motor carriers seeking authority to operate beyond the border commercial zones until the PEIS and General Conformity Evaluation have been completed and considered by FMCSA. Thus, no operations of Mexican-domiciled carriers could take place beyond the border commercial zones as a result of issuance of the Certification rule.

Additionally, given the nature of the Certification rule, the rule standing alone would have no impact on Mexican truck and bus operations beyond the border commercial zones. For example, implementation of the rule would not affect either the number of Mexico-domiciled vehicles entering the United States or the number and duration of safety inspections of these vehicles. Indeed, unlike the application and safety monitoring rules, which

apply solely to Mexico-domiciled motor carriers, the only connection between the Certification rule and the operation of Mexican carriers beyond the border commercial zones is the contingency Congress created when it made issuance of the rule one of the preconditions to the processing of these carriers' applications for operating authority. For these reasons, FMCSA believes that the scope of the Environmental Assessment for the Certification rule is appropriate.

Issued on: September 26, 2003.

John H. Hill,

Assistant Administrator/Chief Safety Officer.

[FR Doc. 03-24979 Filed 10-1-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket Number MARAD 2003 16229]

Requested Administrative Waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Invitation for public comments on a requested administrative waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws for the vessel BON ALIZE.

SUMMARY: As authorized by Public Law 105-383 and Public Law 107-295, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to grant waivers of the U.S.-build requirement of the coastwise laws under certain circumstances. A request for such a waiver has been received by MARAD. The vessel, and a brief description of the proposed service, is listed below. The complete application is given in DOT docket 2003-16229 at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. If MARAD determines, in accordance with Public Law 105-383 and MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388 (68 FR 23084; April 30, 2003), that the issuance of the waiver will have an unduly adverse effect on a U.S.-vessel builder or a business that uses U.S.-flag vessels in that business, a waiver will not be granted. Comments should refer to the docket number of this notice and the vessel name in order for MARAD to properly consider the comments. Comments should also state the commenter's interest in the waiver application, and address the waiver criteria given in § 388.4 of MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388.

DATES: Submit comments on or before November 3, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to docket number MARAD-2003 16229. Written comments may be submitted by hand or by mail to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, Department of Transportation, 400 7th St., SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You may also send comments electronically via the Internet at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit/>. All comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection and copying at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. An electronic version of this document and all documents entered into this docket is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Hokana, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, MAR-830 Room 7201, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-0760.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As described by the applicant the intended service of the vessel BON ALIZE is:

Intended Use: "Sailing charter, private sailing lessons, passage making, and funeral services scattering ashes."

Geographic Region: "California and Hawaii."

Dated: September 29, 2003.

By order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-24997 Filed 10-1-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket Number MARAD 16230]

Requested Administrative Waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Invitation for public comments on a requested administrative waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws for the vessel GATO VERDE.

SUMMARY: As authorized by Pub. L. 105-383 and Pub. L. 107-295, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to grant waivers of the U.S.-build requirement of the coastwise laws under certain circumstances. A request for such a waiver has been received by MARAD. The vessel, and a brief description of the proposed service, is