

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 167

[USCG-2003-16712]

Port Access Routes Study: In the Approaches to Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay, Cleveland Ledge to the Race, Narragansett Bay East Passage, and the Areas Offshore of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of study; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is conducting a Port Access Route Study (PARS) to evaluate the continued applicability of, and the need for modifications to, current vessel routing measures in the approaches to Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay, Cleveland Ledge to the Race, Narragansett Bay East Passage, and the areas offshore of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The goal of the study is to help reduce the risk of marine casualties and increase the efficiency of vessel traffic management in the study area. The recommendations of the study may lead to future rulemaking action or appropriate international agreements.

DATES: Comments and related material must reach the Docket Management Facility on or before February 23, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by Coast Guard docket number USCG-2003-16712 to the Docket Management Facility at the U.S. Department of Transportation. To avoid duplication, please use only one of the following methods:

- (1) *Web Site:* <http://dms.dot.gov>.
- (2) *Mail:* Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- (3) *Fax:* (202) 493-2251.

(4) *Delivery:* Room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is (202) 366-9329.

(5) *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this notice of study, call John Mauro, Project Officer, First Coast Guard District, telephone (617) 223-8355, email jmauro@d1.uscg.mil; or George Detweiler, Office of Vessel Traffic Management, Coast Guard, telephone (202) 267-0574, e-mail Gdetweiler@comdt.uscg.mil. If you have questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, call Andrea M. Jenkins, Program Manager, Docket Operations, telephone (202) 366-0271.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Participation and Request for Comments

We encourage you to participate in this study by submitting comments and related materials. All comments received will be posted, without change, to <http://dms.dot.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. We have an agreement with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to use the Docket Management Facility. Please see DOT's "Privacy Act" paragraph below.

Submitting comments: If you submit a comment, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this notice of study (USCG-2003-16712), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. You may submit your comments and material by electronic means, mail, fax, or delivery to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**; but please submit your comments and material by only one means. If you submit them by mail or delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit them by mail and would like to know that they reached the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

Viewing comments and documents: To view comments, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time and conduct a simple search using the docket number. You may also visit the Docket Management Facility in room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. **Privacy Act:** Anyone can search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review the Department of Transportation's Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477), or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Definitions

The following definitions are from the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) "Ships" Routeing Guide" (except those marked by an asterisk) and should help you review this notice:

Area to be avoided or ATBA means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits in which either navigation is particularly hazardous or it is exceptionally important to avoid casualties and which should be avoided by all vessels or certain classes of vessels.

Deep-water route means a route within defined limits, which has been accurately surveyed for clearance of sea bottom and submerged obstacles as indicated on nautical charts.

Inshore traffic zone means a routing measure comprising a designated area between the landward boundary of a traffic separation scheme and the adjacent coast, to be used in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10(d), as amended, of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS).

Precautionary area means a routing measure comprising an area within defined limits where vessels must navigate with particular caution and within which the direction of traffic flow may be recommended.

Recommended route means a route of undefined width, for the convenience of vessels in transit, which is often marked by centerline buoys.

Recommended track means a route which has been specifically examined to