



COMMITTEE ON

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

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## Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2024 Section-by-Section

### *Section 1. Short Title; Table of Contents*

This section provides that the Act may be cited as the “Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2024.” The section also provides the table of contents for the bill.

### *Section 2. Commandant Defined.*

This section defines "Commandant" as the Commandant of the Coast Guard in this Act.

## **Title I — Authorization of Appropriations**

### *Section 101. Authorizations of Appropriations.*

This section amends Section 4902 of title 14, United States Code, to authorize appropriations of \$ 14.8 billion for fiscal year 2025 and \$15.5 billion for fiscal year 2026 for the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard or Service).

### *Section 102. Shoreside Infrastructure and Facilities and Information Technology.*

This section authorizes \$36.3 million for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026 to modernize the Coast Guard’s information technology (IT) infrastructure, \$500 million for fiscal year 2025 and \$600 million for fiscal year 2026 to fund the acquisition, construction, rebuilding, or improvement of Coast Guard shoreside infrastructure facilities. Within the IT amount, the section authorizes \$11 million to fund the acquisition, development, and implementation of a credentialing system for the Merchant Mariner credentialing program. Within the shoreside infrastructure facilities amount, the section authorizes \$225 million for fiscal year 2025 and \$125 million for fiscal year 2026 for improvements to United States Coast Guard Training Center Cape May in Cape May, New Jersey, \$10 million for fiscal year 2025 to fund the creation of an infrastructure development plan for the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and \$100 million in fiscal year 2026 to execute the plan, and \$50 million in fiscal year 2025 to complete repairs and improvements to Chase Hall at the Coast Guard Academy. It also authorizes \$70 million for fiscal year 2025 and \$100 million for fiscal year 2026 to fund the

planning, design, and building of a floating drydock at Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, Maryland, and \$40 million for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026 for the planning, designing, and building of a HC-130J Hangar at Air Station Barbers Point in Kapolei, Hawaii, and \$90 million for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026 for waterfront improvements of Coast Guard Base Seattle.

*Section 103. Availability of Amounts for Acquisition of Additional Vessels and Aircraft.*

This section authorizes for fiscal year 2025 \$138.5 million for 1 missionized HC-130J aircraft and \$36 million for the service life extension program of the 47-foot Motor Life Boat. For fiscal year 2026 it authorizes \$1.2 billion for the acquisition of a Polar Security Cutter, \$1.1 billion for two Offshore Patrol Cutters, \$138.5 million for 1 missionized HC-130J aircraft, and \$153.5 million for five MH-60T Jayhawk aircrafts.

*Section 104. Authorization for Certain Programs and Services.*

This section authorizes for fiscal year 2025 \$11.98 million to fund additional recruiting personnel and offices for the Coast Guard recruiting Command, \$9 million to enhance Coast Guard recruiting capabilities, and \$25 million to implement the Coast Guard Commandant's directed actions related to the Accountability and Transparency Review. For fiscal year 2026 it authorizes \$35 million to implement the Coast Guard Commandant's directed actions related to the Accountability and Transparency Review.

*Section 105. Authorized Levels of Military Strength and Training.*

This section authorizes 44,500 active-duty personnel for the Coast Guard for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026, and for recruit and special training 2,500 student years, for flight training 165 student years, for professional training 385 student years and for officer acquisition 1,200 student years.

## **Title II — Coast Guard**

### **Subtitle A—Organization and Authorities**

*Section 201. Prohibition on the Use of Lead Systems Integrators.*

This section defines the term “lead systems integrators” as such term is defined in the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006*.

*Section 202. Minor Construction Increase.*

This section increases the threshold for minor construction and improvements for Coast Guard assets that can be funded with operating funds to \$2 million.

*Section 203. Tsunami Evacuation Plans.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to establish tsunami evacuation plans for units and sectors located within areas at high or very high risk of a tsunami.

*Section 204. Service Life Extension Programs.*

This section provides the Coast Guard additional flexibility regarding service life extension programs for Coast Guard cutters.

*Section 205. Maritime Domain Awareness in Coast Guard Sector for Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to provide a report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on issues concerning maritime domain awareness in the area of responsibility of the Coast Guard sector for Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

*Section 206. Public Availability of Information on Monthly Drug and Migrant Interdictions.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to make information on the interdiction and quantity of drugs and number of migrants interdicted publicly available.

*Section 207. Report on Establishment of an Unmanned Systems Capabilities Office.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on its efforts to establish an unmanned systems capabilities office.

*Section 208. Great Lakes Icebreaker.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to submit a strategy to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate regarding the acquisition of the Great Lakes Icebreaker.

*Section 209. Consideration of Life-Cycle Cost Estimates for Acquisition and Procurement.*

This section requires consideration of life-cycle cost estimates for acquisition and procurement of vessels and aircraft. Confirms the Service's acquisition policy with MARAD acquisition policy changes were passed in *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024* (FY24 NDAA) (P.L. 118-31).

*Section 210. Authorization of Certain Support for the United States Coast Guard Academy Foundations.*

This section allows the Coast Guard Academy to provide facilities and equipment support and endorsement to charitable foundations that support the Academy. The section mirrors authorities provided to other military service academies.

*Section 211. National Coast Guard Museum.*

This section allows the Coast Guard to lease the National Coast Guard Museum and other properties owned by the National Coast Guard Museum Association adjacent to Museum. This section also allows the Coast Guard to solicit and accept services from nonprofit entities and enter into contracts, memorandums of agreement with, or make grants to the Association to acquire such services.

*Section 212. Regular Polar Security Cutter Updates.*

This section requires regular reports to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the progress of its Polar Security Cutter acquisition program, and directs the Coast Guard to provide timely briefings and notifications to Congress when there are significant changes in the Polar Security Cutter Acquisition process.

*Section 213. Technology Pilot Program.*

This section amends section 14 U.S.C. 319(b)(1) to increase the number of Coast Guard Small Boats involved in a pilot project to retrofit existing vessels with autonomous control and computer vision technology from 2 to 4. This section amends section 14 United States Code 319(b)(1) to increase the number of Coast Guard Small Boats involved in a pilot project to retrofit existing vessels with autonomous control and computer vision technology from 2 to 4.

*Section 214. Report on Condition of Missouri River Dayboards.*

This section requires a one-time report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the condition of Missouri river dayboards and the placement of buoys.

*Section 215. Delegation of Ports and Waterways Safety Authorities in St. Lawrence Seaway.*

This section delegates Coast Guard authority to the Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and allows the Coast Guard to issue and enforce special orders, safety zones, and take actions for security. It also aligns the implementing regulations, resources, enforcement, and authorities under the *Ports and Waterways Safety Act* between the Coast Guard and Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

*Section 216. Adjustment of Liability Limits for Natural Gas Deepwater Ports.*

This section allows the Secretary of Transportation to initiate rulemaking to lower the limit of liability for deepwater Liquid Natural Gas ports.

*Section 217. Study on Coast Guard Missions.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to enter into an agreement with a Federally funded research and development center to examine Coast Guard mission effectiveness in light and asset and manpower shortages and provide recommendations to address readiness gaps.

**Subtitle B—Personnel**

*Section 221. Direct Hire Authority For Civilian Faculty at the Coast Guard Academy.*

This section allows the United States Coast Guard Academy to hire civilian professors directly.

*Section 222. Temporary Exemption from Authorized End Strength for Coast Guard Enlisted Members on Active Duty.*

This section provides an exemption until 2026 from the 3.0 percent and 1.25 percent threshold under current law for Coast Guard active-duty members in the paygrades E-8 and E-9. This provision is necessary due to the decrease in overall enlisted strength, which places the Coast Guard in jeopardy of exceeding these percentages caps.

*Section 223. Additional Available Guidance and Considerations for Reserve Selection Boards.*

This section allows Coast Guard Reserve Selection Boards to consider the specialty of the Officer, in a similar way to that already undertaken by Active-duty boards, per 14 United States Code 2115. This ensures that the Coast Guard reserve has senior officers with proficiency in specific specialized skills.

*Section 224. Parental Leave Parity for Certain Reserve Components of Coast Guard.*

This section provides parity with the United States Department of Defense (DoD) services for parental leave for reservists as passed in Section 601 of the FY24 NDAA.

*Section 225. Authorization for Maternity Uniform Allowance for Officers.*

This section allows for a limited supplemental cash allowance for pregnant officers to purchase maternity and properly sized uniforms.

*Section 226. Modification to Career Intermision Program.*

This section extends disability, death, and other benefits to a disabled member of the Coast Guard or surviving dependents if they are participating in a program that allows them to be inactivated from active duty to meet personal or professional needs before returning to active duty. It also reduces obligated service for the intermision in service.

*Section 227. Report on GAO Recommendations on Housing Program.*

This section requires that the Commandant submit a report on the status of the implementation of a 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the Coast Guard's Housing Program.

### **Title III — Shipping and Navigation**

#### **Subtitle A—Vessel Operations**

*Section 301. Definitions.*

This section provides technical definitions related to requirements for certain vessel operators.

*Section 302. Notification.*

This section clarifies notification requirements for certain vessels operators.

*Section 303. Publication of Fines and Penalties.*

This section requested that penalties or pre-penalties be published in the Customs Bulletin and Decisions within 14 days of being issued. It also outlines the contents of the notification published, and orders the Secretary to issue regulations within 90 days to implement this.

#### **Subtitle B—Merchant Mariner Credentialing**

*Section 311. Revising Merchant Mariner Deck Training Requirements.*

This section amends the requirements for certain merchant mariner credentials to consider advances in technology and training, and to align Coast Guard requirements with international requirements

*Section 312. Amendments.*

This section changes the term seamen to seafarer in Chapter 73 of title 46 to conform with common usage of the term.

*Section 313. Renewal of Merchant Mariner Licenses and Documents.*

This section clarifies that renewals to existing merchant mariner credentials begin the day after the expiration of the existing credential.

*Section 314. Merchant Seamen Licenses, Certificate, and Documents; Manning of Vessels.*

This section would enable American Samoans who meet the definition of a United States National to be eligible for merchant mariner credentials.

**Subtitle C—Vessel Safety**

*Section 321. Grossly Negligent Operations of a Vessel.*

This section would make the grossly negligent operation of the vessel that results in serious bodily injury a Class E felony.

*Section 322. Administrative Procedure for Security Risks.*

This section provides technical corrections to the requirements to hold a merchant mariner credential.

*Section 323. Requirements for DUKW Amphibious Passenger Vessels.*

This section amends the definition of vessels covered under section 11502 of P.L. 117-263.

*Section 324. Risk Based Examinations of Tank Vessels.*

This section expands the authority of the Commandant to waive annual inspection requirement and substitute a risk-based inspection system for all tank vessels. That discretionary authority already exists with respect to LNG vessels once the National Academy of Sciences submits a report this spring.

*Section 325. Ports and Waterways Safety.*

This section conforms port safety provisions to port security changes made in the maritime title of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-254).

*Section 326. Study on Bering Strait Vessel Traffic Projections and Emergency Response Posture at the Port of Point Spencer, Alaska.*

This section directs a National Academies of Science study on the current volume of commercial traffic that transits through the Bering Strait and projections for traffic growth over the next decade. The report would also assess the adequacy of emergency response capabilities and infrastructure at the Port of Point Spencer, Alaska, to address future navigation safety risks

and geographic challenges necessary to conduct emergency maritime response operations in the Arctic environment.

*Section 327. Underwater Inspections Brief.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to provide a brief on the Service's underwater inspection, in lieu of drydock program, within 30 days of enactment.

*Section 328. St. Lucie River Railroad Bridge.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to conduct an independent boat traffic study at the St. Lucie River Railroad Bridge before adopting a final deviation.

*Section 329. Rulemaking Regarding Port Access Routes.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to issue its final rule for the Atlantic Coast Port Route Access Study with 180 days of enactment of the bill.

**Subtitle D—Other Matters**

*Section 341. Anchor Handling Activities.*

This section clarifies requirements for certain vessels engaged in supporting offshore activities.

*Section 342. Establishment of National Advisory Committee on Autonomous Maritime Systems.*

This section establishes a National Autonomous Maritime Systems Advisory Committee within the Coast Guard.

*Section 343. Controlled Substance Onboard Vessels.*

This section clarifies that under section 70503(a) of title 46, United States Code, it is a prohibited act to place or cause to be placed a controlled substance on a vessel.

*Section 344. Nonoperating Individual.*

This section extends through 2027 the current moratorium on enforcement of violations of the requirement workers on certain vessels, unless specifically exempted in law, have a merchant mariner credential even if those workers are not involved in the operation of the vessel. This extension allows workers not involved in the operation of the vessel to work on such vessel without having a merchant mariner credential.



*Section 345. Information on Type Approval Certificates.*

This section requires the Coast Guard to provide certain ballast water data to states upon their request.

*Section 346. Manning and Crewing Requirements for Certain Vessels, Vehicles, and Structures.*

This section clarifies manning and crewing requirements for certain maritime operators.

*Section 347. Classification Societies.*

This section amends current law to allow the delegation of authority to inspect mobile offshore drilling units (MODUs) working on the United States Outer Continental Shelf to certain foreign classification societies even if the home Nation of such societies do not allow delegate inspection authority for MODUs operating the water of the home Nation.

*Section 348. Authority to Establish Safety Zones for Special Activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone .*

This section provides the Coast Guard with authority to establish safety zones for special activities with the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

*Section 349. Fishing Vessel and Fisherman Training Safety.*

This section requires the Coast Guard to provide certain ballast water data to states upon their request.

*Section 350. Authority over the Deepwater Port Act of 1974.*

This section requires the Department of Transportation to conduct the processing of DWPA permits received after the date of enactment, and ends the Coast Guard's role in processing DWPA permits that are received after the date of enactment of the Act.

*Section 351. National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee Composition.*

This section adds 2 members to the Committee who represent the non-mineral industry since the NDAA for fiscal year 2021 amended the OCSLA to include non-mineral energy resources and this committee advises on safety issues related to the Outer Continental Shelf.

*Section 352. Improving Vessel Traffic Service Monitoring.*

This section implements recommendations from a National Transportation Safety Board report looking into the anchor strike of the underwater pipeline in San Pedro Bay in 2021. The provision seeks to increase the distance between an anchorage and pipeline to avoid incursions and improve the vessel traffic service monitoring by adding audio and visual alarms for proximity alerts.

*Section 353. Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removals.*

This section expands the existing prohibition on abandonment to non-barge vessels and requires the Coast Guard to keep a national inventory of any abandoned non-barge vessels.

**Title IV — Oil Pollution Incident Liability**

*Section 401. Vessel Response Plans.*

This section amends certain Coast Guard requirements for vessel response plans. The section also requires a GAO report on the state of maritime firefighting authorities, jurisdiction and plan review, including factors that impact federal and non-federal cooperation.

*Section 402. Use of Marine Casualty Investigations.*

This section would clarify that the Coast Guard can use Marine Casualty Investigation Reports when adjudicating claims under the *Oil Pollution Act*.

*Section 403. Timing of Review.*

This section clarifies the timing of legal challenges against a Federal On-Scene Coordinator's response decisions during an oil spill emergency.

*Section 404. Online Incident Reporting System.*

This section directs the Coast Guard's National Response Center to develop an online capacity to receive a notification of an oil discharge or release of a hazardous substance and allow any notification to the National Response Center that is required under Federal law or regulation to be submitted through the application.

**Title V - Implementation of Accountability and Transparency Review Recommendations**

*Section 501. Implementation Status of Directed Actions.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to provide an annual report to Congress for the next three years outlining the implementation efforts of the Commandant of the Coast Guard's directed actions, a plan to implement any measures not yet implemented, metrics to determine effectiveness of the actions, and any additional actions the Coast Guard is taking to mitigate instances of sexual assault and sexual harassment within its ranks.

*Section 502. Independent Review of Coast Guard Reforms.*

This section directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to Congress on the Coast Guard's implementation efforts of the Commandant's directed actions, the effectiveness of those efforts, and any additional measures the Coast Guard should implement.

*Section 503 Requirement to Maintain Certain Records.*

This section requires the Coast Guard to maintain deliberative documents related to prosecution decisions for not less than seven years. It requires any final action memo and prosecution memo be signed, and that a record that details who made the prosecutorial determination and what documents that person reviewed while making the decision must be maintained.

*Section 504. Study on Coast Guard Academy Oversight.*

This section directs the Coast Guard to conduct a study on governance at the Coast Guard Academy and provide recommendations to Congress within a year of enactment to improve governance at the Academy.

*Section 505. Providing for the Transfer of a Cadet Who is the Victim of a Sexual Assault or Related Offence.*

This section provides for the transfer of a cadet at the Coast Guard Academy who is the victim of a sexual assault to another military service academy. The section specifies that cadets who transfer to another military service academy can elect to accept an appointment as a permanent commissioned officer in the Coast Guard in the same way other Coast Guard Academy graduate's commission. This section mirrors comparable provisions that apply to cadets at other military service academies.

*Section 506. Designation of Officers with Particular Expertise in Military Justice or Health Care.*

This section provides authority to the Coast Guard to designate a limited number of Officers of the Coast Guard as having particular expertise in military justice and health care professions and not subject to promotion under the Active Duty Promotion List. The provision would allow lawyers and health care professionals to compete amongst other Coast Guard lawyers and health care professionals for promotion rather than the entire Active Duty Promotion List.

*Section 507. Direct Hire Authority for Certain Personnel of Coast Guard.*

This section provides for the direct hire authority of the integrative primary prevention workforce and civilian faculty members at the Coast Guard Academy. This provision sunsets on September 30, 2034.

*Section 508. Safe-to-Report Policy for Coast Guard.*

This section provides safe-to-report language regarding reports of sexual assault at the Coast Guard Academy. It mirrors similar protections available to cadets at other military service academies.

*Section 509 Modification of Delivery Date of Coast Guard Sexual Assault Report.*

This section modifies the due date of the Coast Guard's annual report on sexual assault and harassment report to align with the due date with the annual Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military (DoD Report).

*Section 510. Higher-Level Review of Board of Determination Decisions.*

The section provides for a secondary review if a review board determines that an officer convicted of sexual assault should be retained within the Coast Guard.

*Section 511. Review of Discharge or Dismissal.*

This section allows a board of review to downgrade an honorable discharge or dismissal to a general discharge or dismissal upon finding that a former member who, while serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces, committed sexual assault or sexual harassment.

**Title VI — Amendments**

*Section 601. Amendments.*

This section contains technical and conforming amendments related to authorities in title 46 United States Code.