



*the*  
**COAST GUARD**  
AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



# STRENGTHENING OUR COAST GUARD



The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 supports and strengthens the United States Coast Guard, one of our Nation's five armed services, in its critical missions to save lives, safeguard our shores, and protect living marine resources. These missions include search and rescue, marine safety, maritime law enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, maintaining aids-to-navigation, icebreaking, marine environmental protection, oil spill prevention and response, defense readiness, and ports, waterway, and coastal security.

The Coast Guard consists of approximately 40,000 active duty military personnel, 7,500 reservists, and 8,300 civilian employees. This unique and adaptable military force falls under the Department of Homeland Security during peace time but may become a specialized force within the Navy during times of war.

Every year, the men and women of the Coast Guard conduct tens of thousands of operations to help ensure the safety of Americans and those traveling by sea. Last year, the Coast Guard responded to over 17,500 search and rescue cases saving over 3,400 lives, conducted over 8,600 security boardings of vessels entering U.S. ports, inspected over 12,500 U.S. flagged commercial vessels to ensure safety and security requirements were met, maintained over 51,000 aids to navigation, and interdicted over 3,500 undocumented migrants and 140 metric tons of illegal drugs.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 authorizes the Coast Guard for two years at fiscally responsible levels to carry out these missions, while helping to replace and modernize the Coast Guard's aging assets in a cost effective manner, enhancing oversight, and reducing inefficiencies to save taxpayer dollars.



## SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING THE COAST GUARD

**Authorizes the Coast Guard for Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017:** The legislation ensures the Service has the resources it needs to successfully conduct its critical missions.

**Supports Coast Guard Servicemembers:** Supporting our men and women serving in the Coast Guard is a top priority. This bill ensures Coast Guard officers and enlisted servicemembers receive access to the same benefits as their counterparts in the Department of Defense.

**Helps to Keep the Modernization of Aging Coast Guard Assets on Schedule:** It is essential to ensure the Coast Guard has the tools to carry out its important missions. This legislation authorizes funding at a level that will keep critically needed new aircraft, vessels, and related technology on schedule and on budget.

## IMPROVING MISSION EFFECTIVENESS

**Modernizes Leadership:** Aligns the leadership structure of the Coast Guard with that of the other armed services to improve interaction and cooperation among the services.

**Improves National Security Competencies:** Authorizes the appointment of Coast Guard officers to critical national security assignments.

**Promotes Private Sector Solutions:** Encourages the Coast Guard to explore commercial technologies to solve problems affecting mission performance.

**Seeks Independent Recommendations:** Requires the GAO to review Coast Guard mission performance and provide recommendations on ways to improve effectiveness.

## ENHANCING OVERSIGHT, INCREASING EFFICIENCY, AND SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

**Enhances Accountability in Acquisitions:** Makes important reforms to the acquisition process to reduce costs and improve the quality of assets delivered.

**Increases Congressional Oversight:** In order to ensure accountability and stronger Congressional oversight, the legislation requires the Coast Guard to plan for its long-term acquisition and manpower needs.

**Prevents Taxpayer Dollars from Being Wasted:** Requires the Coast Guard to establish a process to account for public safety services it provides at privately-held marine events and Coast Guard resources utilized at such events. Eliminates, consolidates, and modifies duplicative and outdated reporting requirements.



# SUPPORTING OUR MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 also addresses our maritime transportation system, an essential component of our economy and instrumental to our national security. The U.S. maritime industry sustains more than 500,000 jobs providing nearly \$29 billion in annual wages. There are more than 40,000 commercial vessels currently flying the American flag. The vast majority of these vessels are engaged in domestic commerce, moving over 100 million passengers and \$400 billion worth of goods between ports in the U.S. on an annual basis. Each year, the U.S. maritime industry accounts for over \$100 billion in economic output.

Beyond the important contributions to our economy, a healthy maritime industry is vital to our national security. Throughout our history, the U.S. military has relied on U.S. flagged commercial vessels crewed by American Merchant Mariners to carry troops, weapons, and supplies to the battlefield. During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, U.S. flagged commercial vessels transported 63 percent of all military cargos moved to Afghanistan and Iraq. Since we cannot rely on foreign vessels and crews to provide for our national security, it is critical that we maintain a robust fleet of U.S. flagged vessels, a large cadre of skilled American mariners, and a strong shipyard industrial base.



**Reduces Regulatory Burdens:** Requires the Coast Guard to certify local physicians to make medical fitness determinations of merchant mariners, aligns the expiration of the multiple documents American mariners must carry to work on board vessels, eliminates the need for annual registration of recreational vessels, and encourages the Coast Guard to reduce reporting requirements on industry.

**Promotes Common Sense Regulations:** Revises outdated regulatory definitions to bring them in line with modern industry practice and to improve manufacturing efficiency and recreational vessel safety.

**Improves Accountability at the Federal Maritime Commission:** The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) is the independent federal agency responsible for regulating the U.S. international ocean transportation system for the benefit of U.S. exporters, importers, and the U.S. consumer. The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 reauthorizes the FMC at currently authorized levels for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. The legislation includes reforms to the proceedings of the FMC and limits the spending of taxpayer funds on superfluous awards.



# H.R. 4188, THE COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

## Section By Section

### TITLE I--AUTHORIZATION

#### *Section 101. Authorizations*

This section would authorize \$9.1 billion in discretionary funds for the Coast Guard for each of the fiscal years 2016 and 2017. This is \$398.6 million above the authorized amount for the Coast Guard in section 101 of P.L. 113-281. It would also authorize an end-of-year strength for active duty Coast Guard personnel of 43,000 and sets military training student loads for each of the fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

The President's budget for FY 2016 includes a request to transfer an undefined amount of money from an undefined source within the Department of Homeland Security to the Coast Guard to complete detailed design of the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC). The Committee is very concerned with this unpredictable approach to budgeting. This approach is especially troubling for the OPC as the need for the cutter has been well and thoroughly documented and the requirements for which have been widely and extensively vetted. Failure to enter into a contract for detailed design of the OPC before the end of FY 2016 will significantly increase the cost and substantially delay this vital acquisition. The Committee is very concerned that further delays in the initiation of the procurement will only exacerbate existing gaps in Coast Guard mission capabilities. This section would authorize sufficient funds within the Coast Guard's AC&I account to enter into a contract for detailed design of the OPC in FY 2016. The Committee expects the Coast Guard to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that it awards a contract for detailed design of the OPC at the earliest possible date.

The Committee is concerned with the adequacy of Coast Guard icebreaking capability on the Great Lakes. In recent winters, the percentage of ice cover on the Great Lakes has approached record levels and the Coast Guard has struggled to adequately keep shipping lanes open. From December 2013 to May 2014, 7 million fewer tons were carried by U.S. flagged vessels on the Great Lakes, costing the economy an estimated \$700 million and 4,000 jobs. This section would clarify that funds authorized in the bill may be used to construct an icebreaker capable of buoy tending on the Great Lakes. The Coast Guard is currently in the Analyze/Select phase of acquiring a new polar icebreaker. This section would authorize \$4 million in FY 2016 and \$10 million in FY 2017 for preacquisition activities for a new polar icebreaker. The Coast Guard is currently performing seasonal icebreaking in the Arctic and Antarctic with only one medium and one heavy icebreaker. A third polar icebreaker, the POLAR SEA has been inactive since 2010 due to propulsion plant casualties.

The other armed services are currently required to provide Congress with a manpower requirements plan that justifies requested end strengths against mission requirements. The Coast Guard does not currently provide Congress with a similar plan. This section would improve oversight of the Service's mission performance by requiring the Coast Guard to provide Congress a plan for building and maintaining the force structure it needs to effectively carry out its missions.

#### *Sec. 102. Conforming Amendments*

This section would make conforming and technical changes to title 14, United States Code.

## TITLE II--COAST GUARD

### *Sec. 201. Vice Commandant*

The Coast Guard is the only armed service with a vice service chief that does not have the rank of a four star flag or general officer. This section would change the rank of the Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard from vice admiral to admiral to align the leadership structure of the Coast Guard to that of the other armed services. This change will enable the Vice Commandant to better represent the Coast Guard and the Commandant during frequent interactions with counterparts in the other armed services.

### *Sec. 202. Vice Admirals*

The Coast Guard is currently the only armed service without a chief of staff. The position was discontinued in 2011 and many of the responsibilities were assumed by the Vice Commandant. This has diluted the focus of the Vice Commandant from his traditional duties as the vice service chief. This section would authorize the Coast Guard to reinstate the position of Chief of Staff.

This section would also authorize the President to appoint additional Coast Guard vice admirals to positions in the executive branch, other than the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has requested the appointment of Coast Guard officers to serve on the Joint Staff, but limitations on the number of Coast Guard vice admirals under current law prohibits the Service from fulfilling this pressing national security request.

### *Sec. 203. Coast Guard Remission Of Indebtedness*

This section would ensure that members of the Coast Guard are not held liable for administrative errors that result in overpayment of pay and benefits. Members of the other armed services currently receive similar protections.

### *Sec. 204. Acquisition Reform*

This section would enact recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to improve the performance of new assets acquired by the Coast Guard, as well as oversight of the Service's acquisition process. This section would require the Coast Guard to establish the performance data that will be used to evaluate a new asset prior to testing the asset and to determine the performance thresholds that have to be met during testing. The section would further require the Coast Guard to provide additional information to Congress to ensure better oversight of the Service's multi-year, multi-billion dollar major asset recapitalization effort.

Under current law, the Navy provides Congress with a long-term plan for its shipbuilding requirements. The Coast Guard does not conduct a similar long-term planning effort for its major assets. This section would improve oversight of the Coast Guard's effort to recapitalize its major assets by requiring the Service to develop a long-term plan for its acquisition needs and the funding levels to support them.

### *Sec. 205. Auxiliary Jurisdiction.*

This section would clarify the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.



*Sec. 206. Coast Guard Communities*

This section would reduce administrative barriers in the Coast Guard's program to recognize communities that have supported the Service. The Committee expects that whenever the Service designates a new Coast Guard Community, it will notify the Committee, as well as the Member of Congress representing such community prior to such designation.

*Sec. 207. Polar Icebreakers*

The POLAR SEA is one of the Coast Guard's and the Nation's two polar class heavy icebreakers. Since it suffered a major engine casualty in June 2010, the icebreaker has not been operational. In October 2011, the Coast Guard placed the POLAR SEA in commissioned, inactive service, and cannibalized many of its parts to help reactivate its sister ship, the POLAR STAR.

Section 222 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-213) required the Coast Guard to conduct a business case analysis of the options for, and costs associated with, reactivation of the POLAR SEA. The section would further require the Service to make a determination based on the analysis of whether to reactivate or decommission the icebreaker.

In November 2013, the Service completed the analysis and estimated the reactivation would cost approximately \$99 million to provide 7 to 10 years of service. Although it completed the analysis nearly two years ago, the Service has refused to make a determination concerning the icebreaker's future. The Service is currently spending \$8 million to stabilize and preserve the POLAR SEA and is requesting an additional \$6 million in its FY 2016 budget request to conduct a materiel condition assessment of the icebreaker. Under the timeline put forward by the Coast Guard, a determination to reactivate or decommission the icebreaker will not be made before completion of the assessment in late 2016. In the meantime, the POLAR SEA continues to deteriorate and the United States is left with only one functioning polar class heavy icebreaker.

This section would set a deadline of 1 year for the Coast Guard to complete and submit to Congress its assessment of the condition of the POLAR SEA and its determination of whether it is cost effective to reactivate or compare with other options as part of a strategy to maintain polar icebreaking services.

*Sec. 208. Air Facility Closures*

This section would amend current law to prohibit the Coast Guard from closing any air facility that was operational on November 30, 2014, or from moving any aviation asset from an air facility for the purpose of closing it. This prohibition will sunset on January 1, 2018, or on the date the Secretary submits the rotary wing strategic plans required in this section to Congress, whichever is later. This section would also establish an air facility closure process for the Coast Guard to use after January 1, 2018.

*Sec. 209. Technical Correction*

This section would make technical and clarifying changes to title 14, United States Code.

*Sec. 210. Discontinuance Of An Aid To Navigation*

This section would require the Coast Guard to establish and implement a process that ensures adequate public notification when removing a non-seasonal and non-temporary aid to navigation.

*Sec. 211. Mission performance Measures*

This section would require the GAO to assess the metrics the Coast Guard uses to evaluate its mission performance, as well as the process the Service uses to establish such metrics.

*Sec. 212. Communications*

This section would authorize the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a pilot program, across not less than three components of the Department, to test the effectiveness of commercially available technologies to improve communications during response activities. Six months after a pilot program is completed an assessment of the program would be done and sent to Congress.

*Sec. 213. Coast Guard Graduate Maritime Operations Education*

This section would authorize the Coast Guard to establish a graduate education program at an existing public academic institution to improve the professional development of members and civilian employees of the Coast Guard.

*Sec. 214. Professional Development*

This section would require the Coast Guard to establish a multirater assessment similar to that of the other armed services for its flag officers and members of the Senior Executive Service. This section would also instruct the Commandant to establish a training course for flag officers and members of Senior Executive Service on the workings of Congress for in the national capital region. Additionally, this section would require the Coast Guard to submit a report to Congress on leadership development.

*Sec. 215. Senior Enlisted Member Continuation Boards*

This section would refine the process for involuntary retirement for enlisted members.

*Sec. 216. Coast Guard Member Pay*

This section would require the Coast Guard to conduct a calendar year audit of the pay and allowances of members undergoing a permanent change of station. This section would also require the Coast Guard to submit a report to Congress within 180 days on alternative methods of notifying members on their monthly earnings.

*Sec. 217. Transfer Of Funds Necessary To Provide Medical Care*

This section would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make a transfer payment to the Department of Defense for the value of care provided to members of the Coast Guard and their dependents based on costs of care for the fiscal year in which care was provided as determined by the Secretary of the Department of Defense.

*Sec. 218. Participation Of The Coast Guard Academy In Federal, State, Or Other Educational Grants*

This section would allow the Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association to establish an organization to support academic research and apply for grants on behalf of the Coast Guard Academy.

*Sec. 219. National Coast Guard Museum*

This section would continue the prohibition on the use of federal funds appropriated to the Coast Guard to fund the engineering, design or construction of a National Coast Guard Museum. However, it would end the prohibition on the use of other federal funds for the engineering, design, or construction at such a museum. The priority use section of current law would be amended to clarify that Coast Guard operation and maintenance funds can be used for artifacts, including the design, fabrication and installation of exhibits or displays in which artifacts are included.

*Sec. 220. Investigations*

This section would align investigations of flag officers and members of the Senior Executive Service, serving in the Coast Guard, conducted by the Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security with investigations conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Defense.

*Sec. 221. Clarification Of Eligibility Of Members Of The Coast Guard For Combat-Related Special Compensation*

This section would require the Secretary for the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating to issue procedures and criteria to use in determining whether the disability of a member of the Coast Guard is a combat-related disability for purposes of the eligibility of such member for combat-related special compensation.

*Sec. 222. Leave Policies For The Coast Guard*

This section would require the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating to align its policy for leave for members of the Coast Guard due to the birth or adoption of a child with those of the Secretary of the Navy after the Secretary of the Navy promulgates a new rule, policy or memorandum pursuant to section 704 of title 10, United States Code.

## **TITLE III--SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION**

*Sec. 301. Survival Craft*

This section would require the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating to submit to Congress by December 31, 2016, a report reviewing the number of casualties, over the last 30 years, for individuals with disabilities, children and the elderly as a result of immersion, by type of passenger vessel, area of operation and casualties in the waters of other nations. Reviews would occur once every five years. The section would also phase-in a requirement to carry out-of-water survival craft by passenger vessels operating in certain waters. Under this section, the Coast Guard may revise regulations concerning the carriage of survival craft after a review of factors regarding out-of-water survival craft. GAO would also be required to submit to Congress, within five years, a report on casualties resulting from immersion in cold water, following the implementation of the changes in this section.

### *Sec. 302. Vessel Replacement*

This section would modify the financial assistance to fishing vessels to include a definition of historical uses and includes new uses for construction or reconstruction of a vessel operating in a limited access system or for purchasing harvesting rights in a limited access system. This section would also direct the Secretary to make no less than \$59 million available in loan guarantees for historical uses.

### *Sec. 303. Model Years For Recreational Vessels*

The Coast Guard's current regulatory definition of model year for recreational vessels is inconsistent with industry practice and interferes with the marketplace. This section would revise the definition of model year for new recreational vessels and provides industry with appropriate discretion to market their products.

### *Sec. 304. Merchant Mariner Credential Expiration Harmonization*

The Coast Guard would require American mariners to apply for and carry several documents to work aboard vessels. These documents often expire at different times requiring the mariner and their employers to lose days of work to satisfy renewal requirements. This section would alleviate this administrative burden and lost productivity by requiring the Coast Guard to harmonize the expiration of merchant mariner credentials, radar observer endorsements, and medical certificates for certain mariners.

### *Sec. 305. Safety Zones For Permitted Marine Events*

This section would require the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating to establish and implement a process to account for the number of safety zones created for permitted marine events, the event sponsor requesting the permit, and Coast Guard resources utilized to enforce the safety zones.

### *Sec. 306. Technical Corrections*

This section would make technical corrections to shipping and navigation law (Titles 33 and 46 of the United States Code)

### *Sec. 307. Recommendations For Improvements Of Marine Casualty Reporting*

The Department of Homeland Security Inspector General and the Coast Guard's Towing Safety Advisory Committee recently provided the Service with recommendations to modernize and improve its marine casualty reporting program. This section would require the Coast Guard to notify the Committee of the actions it is taking to implement these recommendations.

### *Sec. 308. Recreational Vessel Engine Weights*

It has been more than 20 years since the Coast Guard updated the references it provides manufacturers to use to determine the weight of engines when conducting flotation tests of its new products. Today's engines are considerably heavier than those built in 1984. Using the outdated Coast Guard references for engine weight could result in less flotation being added to the recreational vessel than is required to avoid swamping or sinking. This section would require the Coast Guard to update its references to recreational vessel engine weights to ensure accurate vessel flotation tests by manufacturers and improve recreational vessel safety.

*Sec 309. Merchant Mariner Medical Certification Reform*

In order to work on a vessel, American mariners are required to meet certain medical and physical fitness standards established by the Coast Guard. To certify that they meet such standards, mariners are required to take a form developed by the Coast Guard to their doctor, have the doctor fill it out, and submit it to the Coast Guard for review and certification. Coast Guard employees make a medical fitness determination based solely on the information included on the form. This centralized process creates substantial administrative burden on the mariner and often leads to delays in processing mariner medical certificates.

Since 1927, the Federal Aviation Administration has had a system in place to certify the medical and physical fitness of pilots that relies on government certified private physicians to examine pilots and empowers them to issue medical certificates. This efficient system has not undermined safety, nor resulted in the delays and administrative burdens inherent in the Coast Guard's system of medical certification.

This section would require the Coast Guard to certify private physicians to make medical fitness determinations of merchant mariners. Nothing in this section is intended to compel the Coast Guard to terminate its current process of conducting medical certification or make changes to current medical fitness requirements for mariners.

*Sec. 310. Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study*

This section would require the Coast Guard to complete its on-going Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (PARS) by April 2016. This provision was included in H.R. 1987 because the House was concerned about the impacts on navigation safety from the construction of certain offshore renewable energy projects. The Atlantic Coast PARS will assist the federal government, as well as stakeholders, to understand potential impacts and whether the siting of these projects could pose hazards to safe navigation, especially projects build in or near vessel traffic routes.

The Coast Guard's Atlantic Coast PARS working group has developed standards and a methodology for assessing potential impacts on navigation safety including high, medium and low or minimal impacts. The purpose of the Atlantic Coast PARS and the reason for developing standards and methodologies is to assist in future determinations of waterway suitability for proposed development projects.

When the Atlantic Coast PARS began, it excluded the waters in and around Nantucket Sound. These waters are heavily traveled by commercial vessels, fishing and recreational vessels as well as passenger and freight ferries. Because of increased vessel traffic and the potential impacts to navigation from any future development, this section would direct the Coast Guard to complete a separate port access route study of Nantucket Sound using the new standards and methodologies developed by the Coast Guard's working group. The Atlantic Coast PARS will help the Coast Guard determine whether they should revise current regulations to improve navigation safety by establishing safety fairways, traffic separation zones or new vessel routing. The Nantucket Sound PARS is intended to guide decision-makers to ensure that any future development in Nantucket Sound will have minimal impact and low risk to navigational safety. This section would require the completion of the Nantucket Sound PARS by December 1, 2016.

*Sec. 311. Certificates Of Documentation For Recreational Vessels*

While Coast Guard certificates of documentation (COD) are not required for recreational vessels, many owners elect to document their vessels to facilitate passage into foreign ports and to preclude them from having to abide by state registration requirements. However, the Coast Guard requires CODs be renewed on an annual basis and does not allow owners to carry them in electronic form. This presents an unnecessary administrative burden on vessel owners. This section would require the Coast Guard to develop a COD for recreational vessels that is valid for five years.

*Sec. 312. Program Guidelines*

Section 304(a) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-241) required the Secretary of Transportation to implement a program to promote the transportation of liquefied natural gas on U.S. flag vessels. In the nine years since this provision was enacted, the Secretary has failed to issue guidelines to implement this program. This section would set a deadline for the Secretary to develop such guidelines. It would further require that the guidelines include provisions to improve the training of U.S. mariners on liquefied natural gas vessels.

*Sec. 313. Repeals*

This section would repeal inoperative provisions of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936.

*Sec. 314. Maritime Drug Law Enforcement*

This section would strengthen current law by making it illegal on a covered vessel to knowingly or intentionally: manufacture or distribute, or possess with intent to manufacture or distribute a controlled substance; destroy or attempt to destroy property subject to forfeiture; and conceal or attempt to conceal more than \$100,000 in currency or other monetary instruments. Penalty provisions are also included in this section for any destruction or attempt to destroy property subject to forfeiture and for bulk cash smuggling.

*Sec. 315. Examinations For Merchant Mariner Credentials*

This section would allow the Secretary to release to the public, for the purpose of exam preparation, retired or not presently used exam questions required for merchant seamen licenses, certificates, and documents. The section would require the Commandant of the Coast Guard to commission a working group to review new questions for inclusion in examinations for merchant seamen licenses, certificates, and documents and outlines which groups should participate in the working group.

*Sec. 316. Higher Volume Port Area Regulatory Definition Change*

This section would clarify the definition of a Higher Volume Port, as defined in title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, for Puget Sound by changing the western boundary from Port Angeles, WA to Cape Flattery WA.

*Sec.317. Recognition Of Port Security Assessments Conducted By Other Entities*

This section would authorize the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating to recognize port security assessments done by foreign governments or international organizations that evaluate the effec-

tiveness of the antiterrorism measures maintained at foreign ports. This section would also authorize the Commandant to enter into agreements with foreign governments or international organizations to conduct security assessments abroad. Thirty days before entering into an agreement or arrangement, the Secretary would be required to notify Congress on the proposed terms of the agreement or arrangement.

*Sec. 318. Fishing Vessel and Fish Tender Vessel Certification*

This section would establish safety requirements for vessels at least 50 feet in overall length and less than 79 feet in overall length and built after the day of enactment of the Act. The section would require a report no later than 10 years after the date of enactment regarding the adequacy of the requirements established in the section and if a determination is made that the requirements are not adequate or that additional safety measures are necessary, the Secretary is authorized to establish an alternative safety compliance program including requirements outlined in the section. The section would also require GAO to: review national and regional trends of marine casualties, human injuries and deaths on vessels greater than 79 feet operating beyond 3-nautical miles; compare U.S. regulations for classification of fishing vessels to those of other countries; review the cost impact of 4503(a) of title 46, United States Code, requirements in relation to vessel size and regions; determine any savings as a result of the regulations and if there are safety benefits associated with classified vessels; and determine if the regulations have an impact on the cost and availability of qualified shipyards.

*Sec. 319. Interagency Coordinating Committee On Oil Pollution Research*

This section would amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to better reflect the structure of the Executive Branch agencies that sit on the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Oil Pollution Research for jurisdictional purposes.

*Sec. 320. International Port And Facility Inspection Coordination*

This section would amend the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 by transferring authority to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and increases coordination between the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection.

## **TITLE IV--FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION**

*Sec. 401. Authorization Of Appropriations*

This section would authorize \$24.7 million in funds for the activities of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. This is the same level of funding that was authorized for the FMC in section 401 of P.L. 113-281.

*Sec. 402. Duties Of The Chairman*

This section would reform certain administrative procedures of the FMC to improve accountability. Specifically, this section would ensure that all Commissioners have the opportunity to review hiring decisions and FMC annual budget submissions.

*Sec. 403. Prohibition On Awards*

For the past few years, the Chairman of the FMC has spent staff time and taxpayer resources to recognize private companies with Earth Day Awards. The FMC has no statutory or regulatory authority over environmental protection or restoration. This section would only allow the FMC to issues awards consistent with the purposes set forth in section 40101 of title 46, United States Code.

## **TITLE V—CONVEYANCES**

### **SUBTITLE A- MISCELLANEOUS CONVEYANCES**

*Sec. 501. Conveyance Of Coast Guard Property In Marin County, California*

This section would authorize the Coast Guard to convey, at fair market value, the property under its administrative control in Point Reyes, California to the County of Marin, California. The appraisal is required to be determined by a real estate appraiser selected by the County and licensed to practice in California and approved by the Commandant. Proceeds of the sale will be deposited in the Coast Guard Housing Fund.

*Sec. 502. Conveyance Of Coast Guard Property In Tok, Alaska*

This section would authorize the Coast Guard to convey, at fair market value, property under its administrative control Tok, Alaska to the Tanana Chiefs Council, a nonprofit intertribal consortium of federally recognized Alaska tribes. A survey of the exact acreage and legal description of the property would be required and proceeds of the sale will be deposited in the Coast Guard Housing Fund.

### **SUBTITLE B- PRIBILOF ISLANDS**

*Sec. 521. Short Title*

This subtitle may be cited as the “Pribilof Island Transition Completion Act of 2015.

*Sec. 522. Transfer And Disposition Of Property*

This section describes what property will be transferred over to the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island under this act. The property consists of a former Indian Health Service clinic and a parcel the Coast Guard uses for federal aids to navigation under a license with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The property being used by the Coast Guard will not convey until the license under which the property is used expires. This section would clarify that the Coast Guard may continue to access the property to operate, maintain, keep, locate, inspect, or repair any federal aid to navigation on the property even after the expiration of the license. This section would also require a report within two years that addresses what the Coast Guard is doing to remediate contaminated soils on the property.

*Sec. 523. Notice Of Certification*

Existing law deems the cleanup and transfer of land, specified in the Transition of Property Agreement complete when the Secretary of Commerce certifies that: (1) the State of Alaska has provided written confirmation that no further corrective action is required at the sites and operable units covered by the Pribilof Islands Environmental



Restoration agreement between NOAA and the State; (2) specific cleanup requirements have been completed; (3) certain properties can be unconditionally offered for conveyance; and (4) amounts appropriated under the Fur Seal Act have been obligated. This section would require the Secretary to notify Congress that certification is made. In addition, this section would require the Secretary to make a determination that land on St. Paul Island is in excess of the needs of the Secretary and the federal government and notify the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island. The Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island can then elect to receive the land and if it does, the Secretary is required to transfer the land. Any land not transferred to the Alaska native village corporation for St. Paul Island can be disposed of in accordance with other applicable law. This section would require the Secretary to report to Congress on when a determination is made.

*Sec. 524. Redundant Capability*

This section would clarify the ability for the Coast Guard to re-enter property transferred under this Act in case the LORAN station located on the property is needed in the event of a GPS disruption.

**SUBTITLE C- CONVEYANCE OF COAST GUARD PROPERTY TO POINT SPENCER, ALASKA**

*Sec. 531. Findings*

This section would establish the need to convey property in Point Spencer, Alaska. A major reason is to develop infrastructure that will best facilitate the need for more deep water ports as well as aid current Coast Guard operations.

*Sec. 532. Definitions*

This section contains definitions of the terms used in the rest of the subtitle.

*Sec. 533. Authority To Convey Land In Point Spencer*

This section would establish the conditions for which land will be offered to the State and the Bering Straits Native Corporation.

*Sec. 534. Environmental Compliance, Liability, And Monitoring*

This section would allow for land to be transferred to the State or the Bering Straits Native Corporation without having been fully remediated. This section would also require continued monitoring of known contamination and the United States shall remain responsible for any liability with respect to activities carried out before the property was conveyed. If land is conveyed in such a condition, Institutional Controls may be used to protect human health and the environment if the controls are in accordance with federal and State law and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Governor concur that the controls are protective of human health and the environment.

*Sec. 535. Easements And Access*

This section would grant the Coast Guard and the State access to and use of the air facilities located on the tracts conveyed.

*Sec. 536. Relationship To Public Land Order 2650*

This section states that tracts not conveyed in this subtitle will remain withdrawn for the purpose of Public Land Order 2650, while Public Land Order 2650 will terminate with respect to tracts conveyed under this section.

*Sec. 537. Archeological And Cultural Resources*

This section would clarify that nothing in this subtitle shall affect ongoing criminal investigations relating to archeological or cultural resources located in or on conveyed tracts.

*Sec. 538. Maps And Legal Descriptions*

This section would direct the Secretary of the Interior to prepare maps and legal descriptions, as well as conduct a survey of the Tracts conveyed. Currently, no official map exists and the last survey took place in 1978.

*Sec. 539. Chargeability For Land Conveyed*

This section would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to charge any conveyance of land conveyed to the State or the Bering Straits Native Corporation against either entity's remaining entitlement under the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508) or the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43. U.S.C. 1613(g)(h)).

*Sec. 540. Redundant Capability*

This section would clarify the ability for the Coast Guard to re-enter property transferred under this subtitle in case the LORAN station located on the property is needed in the event of a GPS disruption.

*Sec. 541. Port Coordination Council For Point Spencer*

This section would establish a Port Coordination Council for Point Spencer, consisting of the State and the Bering Straits Native Corporation, which will work to coordinate and plan for future infrastructure development while working with the Coast Guard to help facilitate operations in the Arctic.

## **TITLE VI- MISCELLANEOUS**

*Sec. 601. Modification Of Reports*

This section would modify the frequency of two reports. This section also would require a report from the Coast Guard to the Department of Homeland Security, within 60 days of the date of enactment of this Act, on the details and status of interoperable communications necessary for the Coast Guard to carry out its missions that require communication with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-federal entities.

*Sec. 602. Safe Vessel Operation In The Great Lakes*

This section would bar the Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency from prohibiting the uptake or discharge of ballast water from a vessel operating in certain National Marine Sanctuaries located in the Great Lakes if such uptake and discharge meets all federal and state requirements and the designation documents for the Marine Sanctuary do not prohibit such uptake and discharge.

*Sec. 603. Use Of Vessel Sale Proceeds*

This section would require the GAO to conduct and submit to the House and Senate Committees an audit of the proceeds from the sale of vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

*Sec. 604. National Academy Of Sciences Cost Assessment*

This section would authorize the National Academy of Sciences to conduct and submit to the House and Senate Committees a study on the costs to carry out icebreaking missions as well as options for carrying out such missions.

*Sec. 605. Coastwise Endorsement*

This section would allow the issuance of coastwise endorsements for two vessels, the M/V Elettra III and the F/V Rondys.

*Sec. 606. International Ice Patrol*

This section would direct the Commandant of the Coast Guard to submit a report to Congress within 180 days that describes the current operations of the International Ice Patrol as well as alternatives to carry out that mission.

*Sec. 607. Assessment Of Oil Spill Response And Cleanup Activities In The Great Lakes*

This section would direct the Commandant to consult with the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and any other appropriate agency to conduct an assessment on the effectiveness of oil spill response activities in the Great Lakes and submit a report to Congress on the findings within 2 years of the date of enactment of this Act.

*Sec. 608. Report On Status Of Technology Detecting Passengers Who Have Fallen Overboard*

This section would direct the Commandant to submit a report to Congress within 18 months that describes the status of technology that immediately detects passengers who have fallen overboard. The report should include recommendations to the cruise lines on how to implement the technology as well as on the status of integration technology.

*Sec. 609. Venue*

This section would clarify the jurisdiction of United States District Courts as they relate to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1861).

*Sec. 610. Disposition Of Infrastructure Related To E-LORAN*

This section would create a new section 681 in chapter 17 of title 14, United States Code, to consolidate existing law provisions for dismantling or disposal of LORAN-C system infrastructure into one section of the United States Code and repeals the duplicative free standing statutory language.

*Sec. 611. Parking*

This section would maintain the existing payment structure for the Coast Guard regarding parking spaces at its St. Elizabeth's Campus, but includes additional language that would prohibit the Administrator of General Services from charging the Coast Guard or members and employees of the Coast Guard for any additional parking spaces GSA makes available to the Coast Guard through September 30, 2017.

*Sec. 612. Inapplicability Of Load Line Requirements To Certain United States Vessels Travelling In The Gulf of Mexico.*

Current law allows river barges to transit on the Gulf of Mexico within 12 nautical miles of the coast. Certain transit routes have waters too shallow for vessels to safely transverse within the 12 nautical mile limit. This section would allow U.S. vessels transiting on the Gulf of Mexico on a domestic voyage to operate out to 15 nautical miles seaward of the baseline of the territorial sea of the United States between Crystal Bay, Florida and Hudson Creek, Florida.