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[atownsend@americanwaterways.com](mailto:atownsend@americanwaterways.com)**American Waterways Operators Hails Coast Guard's  
Publication of Subchapter M Rule**

ARLINGTON, VA – The American Waterways Operators, the national trade association for the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, hailed the U.S. Coast Guard's publication of the rule to establish an inspection regime for towing vessels at 46 CFR Subchapter M, which will take safety in the towing industry to a new and historic level. Subchapter M sets minimum safety standards for towing vessels, incorporating and building on the safeguards that quality companies have already put in place, to ensure that the entire industry achieves the level of safety that is necessary to protect lives, the environment and property.

“Today's publication of the Subchapter M rule is a truly momentous and transformative occasion for the tugboat and towboat industry. It represents the culmination of over a decade of work by the Coast Guard in partnership with our industry, and the achievement of a significant milestone in the industry's quarter-century journey of continuous improvement to enhance safety and environmental stewardship. AWO members, who have demonstrated a deep and longstanding commitment to safety leadership, have played an integral role in the development of Subchapter M and will be critical to its successful implementation,” said Thomas Allegretti, AWO President & CEO.

In 2003, AWO's Board of Directors voted to support the Coast Guard in seeking the statutory authority to establish a towing vessel inspection regime. The Congress granted the agency that authority in 2004. From that time, the Coast Guard engaged in an extensive and inclusive process of consultation with the tugboat and towboat industry, other stakeholders, and the public to inform its design of the Subchapter M rule. Beginning in 2009, AWO also worked with the Coast Guard to institute and execute the Towing Vessel Bridging Program to help the agency and the industry prepare for the transition to inspection.

“AWO members are eager to move into the next crucial phase of this journey, which is working with the Coast Guard to ensure that the Subchapter M rule is implemented smoothly and effectively so that it achieves its potential to raise the bar of safety and environmental stewardship without interruption to maritime commerce. AWO is committed to ensuring that all members have the tools they need to comply with Subchapter M, including appropriate implementation policy and guidance,” said Jennifer Carpenter, AWO Executive Vice President & COO.

The Subchapter M rule will be phased in over six years. In addition to the traditional compliance model of annual Coast Guard inspection, vessel operators can choose to comply with Subchapter M through the development and implementation of a Coast Guard-accepted Towing Safety Management System. Last year, the Coast Guard affirmed its intent to accept the Responsible Carrier Program, AWO's longstanding and award-winning safety management system, as a TSMS following the publication of Subchapter M. "AWO is working with the Coast Guard to finalize its acceptance of the RCP as a TSMS as quickly as possible, ensuring that the most widely used safety management system in the tugboat, towboat and barge industry provides a practicable path to compliance with Subchapter M," added Ms. Carpenter.

**The American Waterways Operators** is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which operates on the rivers, the Great Lakes, and along the coasts and in the harbors of the United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, please visit [www.americanwaterways.com](http://www.americanwaterways.com).

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