

## Corps Releases GLMRIS Report; AWO, UnLock Our Jobs Respond

On January 6, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study Report, which explores options and technologies available for preventing the transfer of aquatic invasive species, including Asian carp, between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The study, which was authorized by Congress in 2007, has been a focal point of the debate over physical separation of the basins. To read the GLMRIS Report, click [here](#).

The report presents eight alternatives, four of which involve the complete or partial hydrologic separation of the basins through the construction of physical barriers at various points in the Chicago Area Waterways System. Of the other four alternatives, two are also structural, involving the construction of new locks or the modification of existing locks with technology that deters invasive species; one comprises nonstructural control measures designed to control invasive

species populations; and one (a baseline) involves sustaining federal, state and local activities at their current level.

The hydrologic separation alternatives have the highest estimated price tag and longest implementation schedule, with the Corps projecting them to cost between \$8.3 and \$18.3 billion and take 25 years to construct. This timeline assumes the best-case scenarios for both project funding from the Corps and its non-federal sponsors and the speed of the regulatory process. All hydrologic separation alternatives would also have significant adverse impacts on waterborne commerce, estimated at between \$7.3 and \$250 million. Although the Corps indicated that the two alternatives involving complete hydrologic separation are likely to have the most effect on invasive species control, the Corps made clear in its report that “the top-ranked alternatives cannot guarantee the complete elimination of negative consequences that would result from [invasive species] transfer and establishment, given that an absolute

solution guaranteeing the complete prevention of [invasive species] transfer may not be feasible or even technologically possible.” Notably, the report did not fully explore ways to prevent the human transfer of invasive species between the basins.

In response to the report’s release, AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti stated, “We believe it is clear from

the GLMRIS Report that [physical separation] is neither economically feasible nor will it be effective at eliminating all identified pathways for the spread of invasive species, including Asian carp. Severing a critical part of the nation’s water transportation network is too high a price to pay for a solution that is not guaranteed to stop the spread of invasive species,” he continued.

The UnLock Our Jobs coalition, of which AWO is a member, also responded, joining AWO’s call for a comprehensive program of control measures that protect the environment while preserving the free flow of waterborne commerce and

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## 2014 Marks AWO’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

2014 will be an exciting one for AWO as we embark on a year-long celebration of the organization’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The rich, 70-year history of AWO is full of wonderful people, special moments and outstanding industry achievements. We hope you’ll join us this year as we look back at the past, and, equally important, look forward to a bright future. Neither would be possible without you. Stay tuned for more details on the celebrations in store. 🍀



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addressing water quality and flood control concerns for impacted communities in the Chicago area.



The Corps held a congressional briefing in Washington, DC, on January 8, followed by a presentation to industry and the first of several planned public meetings in Chicago, IL, on January 9. Also on January 9 in Chicago, UnLock Our Jobs organized a press event featuring AWO member John Kindra, Kindra Lake Towing, LP, and representatives from the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and Illinois Farm Bureau.

The Corps will accept comments on the GLMRIS Report until March 3. The Corps will continue its series of public meetings with presentations at the following locations:

- **Milwaukee, WI** on January 13
- **Cleveland, OH** on January 16
- **Ann Arbor, MI** on January 21
- **Traverse City, MI** on January 23
- **Twin Cities, MN** on January 27
- **St. Louis, MO** on January 30

The Corps will allow participation in the Ann Arbor meeting via webinar. To register to speak at any of the meetings in advance, please click [here](#) to visit the GLMRIS Report website and click the “Register to Speak” button below the meeting you plan to attend.

As the sole marine transportation link between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system, the CAWS plays an important role in both the regional and national economies. Almost one-fourth of the commodity shipments via the CAWS originate in the New Orleans area, including petroleum products, chemicals, and iron and steel. Nearly 10 percent of the goods transported through the CAWS end up in the Lower Mississippi and along the Gulf Coast, including U.S. export grain.

For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or [lmuench@vesselalliance.com](mailto:lmuench@vesselalliance.com), or Caitlyn Stewart at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or [cstewart@vesselalliance.com](mailto:cstewart@vesselalliance.com).

## Full Transition to RCP Auditor Certification by TVIB Takes Effect

As of January 1, Responsible Carrier Program audits will be conducted by auditors trained and certified by the Towing Vessel Inspection Bureau. TVIB began training auditors in 2013 through two different training sessions and there are now 52 TVIB-certified RCP auditors, with 19 more in the process of certification. This transition is one step in the continuous improvement of the RCP in preparation for eventual implementation of the safety management system requirements of Subchapter M.

The content of the RCP has not changed and the AWO Board of Directors remains the only body that can make changes to the program. Pursuant to a January 2013 Memorandum of Agreement with AWO, however, TVIB is authorized to improve the audit process and associated tools and has already worked with the AWO RCP Standards Board to produce a revised management audit checklist. TVIB has also created a thorough worksheet that provides additional clarification and detail for those conducting and receiving RCP audits. Moving forward, the RCP vessel audit checklists will also be revised.

Both AWO and TVIB have updated their websites to reflect the new process. The audit checklists and list of approved auditors are hosted on the [TVIB website](#) and the RCP Manual and Addenda will continue to be on the [AWO website](#). All documents are also cross linked between the respective websites.

About 70 AWO members participated in a webinar on January 8 to learn more about the revised process and how it affects their RCP audits. Chris Parsonage, TVIB’s Executive Director, explained the background of TVIB’s development and the goals and purpose of the organization, in particular to provide a pool of professional, third-party certified auditors to conduct RCP audits. The webinar also included the opportunity for participants to have their specific questions answered. The presentation from the webinar, along with a summary of the questions asked and the answers provided, will be sent to participants and any others who are interested in receiving the information. In addition, there will be a similar presentation and Q&A session at the AWO safety committee meetings on January 15-16 in New Orleans.

For more information on the Responsible Carrier Program and the TVIB transition, please contact Holly Riester at (703) 841-9300, extension 253, or [hriester@vesselalliance.com](mailto:hriester@vesselalliance.com).

## AWO Announces Staff Promotions, Position Changes

AWO has announced a series of staff promotions and position changes as the first step in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Future Missions and Capacity of AWO, overwhelmingly approved by the Board of Directors at the October 2013 Fall Convention. The staff changes are aimed at filling critical capacity gaps, developing a more sustainable organization and positioning AWO to better meet member needs and expectations now and in the future.

In a January 6 press release, AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti announced the promotion of **Jennifer Carpenter**, AWO Senior Vice President – National Advocacy, to the new position of Executive Vice President.

“Jennifer’s promotion to Executive Vice President is richly deserved and fully earned. She has demonstrated consistently over many years her broad and deep knowledge of our industry and her mastery of the public policy challenges facing AWO members,” Mr. Allegretti stated. “Her reputation as our industry’s most effective advocate is impeccable. Jennifer is highly respected in the American maritime industry, by members of Congress and senior government officials, and most importantly, by AWO members.”

“Due in no small part to Jennifer’s contributions over the last two decades, AWO has become a recognized safety leader and a more effective advocacy organization,” Mr. Allegretti continued. “The public policy challenges facing our industry have never been greater. In this new role, I am confident that Jennifer will expand her already considerable contributions to AWO and will continue to lead us to even greater levels of achievement. Her expanded responsibilities in this new position will serve AWO members very well.”



CARPENTER



STEWART



DOWLING

In other changes, AWO announced the promotion of Government Affairs Manager **Caitlyn Stewart** to the new position of Senior Manager-Regulatory Affairs and the transition of Government Affairs Associate **Kevin Dowling** to the new position of Public Affairs & Communications Associate. The new positions filled by Ms. Stewart and Mr. Dowling were recommended by the Capacity Task Force to fill important gaps in AWO’s capacity. The search for their successors will begin immediately.

AWO also announced a title change for **Frank Leach** to Government Affairs & Political Coordinator to better reflect the scope of his current responsibilities and his important role in AWO’s political program, and the promotion of **Carmina Smith**, formerly Manager-Organizational Integrity & Improvement, to the new position of Director – Operations & Administration, effective February 1.

“AWO is very pleased to announce the well-deserved promotion of Caitlyn Stewart,” Ms. Carpenter said. “In her three and half years with AWO, Caitlyn has demonstrated her knowledge of the regulatory challenges



LEACH



SMITH

facing AWO members while building a strong relationship with AWO members. She is an effective ambassador for the industry, ensuring that AWO members are well represented in debates over critical policy issues such as invasive species and ballast water. She is a leader on our advocacy team and will continue to serve AWO well in this new role.”

“AWO deeply appreciates the member confidence demonstrated by the Board vote to approve the Capacity Task Force recommendations. The staff changes that we have announced will increase AWO’s capacity to deliver greater value to members as we move forward with a robust plan to implement the Task Force recommendations. We are pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the fine work of Jennifer, Caitlyn, Carmina, Kevin and Frank, and we look forward to a year of measurable progress and results for AWO members,” Mr. Allegretti stated. ❀

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

The year will begin with a flurry of meetings across the nation offering members the opportunity to hear from experts on industry-important issues, socialize with other maritime professionals and play an active role in the future of the association. Meetings are a significant benefit of membership, so don't miss out on these opportunities. If you have questions about any of the 2014 meetings or events, please contact Sarah Young at (703) 841-9300, extension 291 or [syoung@vesselalliance.com](mailto:syoung@vesselalliance.com).



### January 15-17, 2014

*Safety Committees' Joint Annual Meeting and the Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley & Southern Regions*  
The Westin New Orleans Canal Place | New Orleans, LA  
Register Onsite

### January 29-30

*Atlantic Region Annual Meeting*  
Hotel Monaco Baltimore | Baltimore, MD  
[Register](#) for the Meeting

### February 19-20

*Pacific Region Annual Meeting*  
Four Seasons Seattle | Seattle, WA  
[Register](#) for the Meeting  
[Reserve](#) a Room using Promo Code: 1310AWOPAC (Deadline January 28)

### February 26-27

*Executive Committee Meeting*  
Executive Committee members only  
AWO Office | Arlington, VA

### April 1-3

*2014 Spring Convention, Annual Membership Meeting & Barge-In*  
Mandarin Oriental | Washington, D.C.  
[Register](#) for the Meeting  
[Reserve](#) a Room (Deadline March 4)

### July 30-31

*Executive Committee Meeting*  
Executive Committee members only  
AWO Office | Arlington, VA

### October 22-24

*2014 Fall Convention & Board Meeting*  
JW Marriott | Oahu, HI

### December 2-3

*Executive Committee Meeting*  
Executive Committee members only  
AWO Office | Arlington, VA

Companies looking for extra exposure at AWO meetings and events may want to consider sponsoring one or more of the meetings. Sponsorships are available at many price points for each of the meetings listed above, even this week's New Orleans meetings. A custom sponsorship offers benefits like logo placement in meeting promotions and elevated presence during and after the meeting. If you are interested in learning more about sponsorship levels, please contact Sarah Young at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or [syoung@vesselalliance.com](mailto:syoung@vesselalliance.com).

### Pacific Region

## WA DNR Rules that Mooring Buoy May Remain in Port Madison Bay



On December 24, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources issued a ruling that the mooring buoy located in Port Madison Bay in Puget Sound may remain at its current location. The decision came in response to a petition requesting that the moorage be discontinued because it interfered with the waterfront view of the Sound. In comments submitted to the Department, AWO stressed the mooring buoy's importance to navigation and safety, stating that "it is an important and safe mooring location as the buoy is well-maintained, located away from major traffic lanes, and protected from high winds and high seas on Puget Sound during the winter months." To read AWO's comments, click [here](#).

In its determination, the Washington State DNR ruled that the buoy can remain at its current location in Port Madison Bay, and found that it does not obstruct navigation or views of the sound and does not pose a threat to the environment. AWO applauds the DNR's decision and will continue to work to protect essential aids to navigation and vessel safety. For more information, please contact Charles Costanzo at (206) 257-4723 or [ccostanzo@vesselalliance.com](mailto:ccostanzo@vesselalliance.com).



## Durbin Calls Complete Separation a 'Risky Plan'

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today released the following statement after reviewing an Army Corps of Engineers report examining several options for containing invasive species, including Asian Carp, in the Great Lakes. Durbin joined U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Carl Levin (D-MI) and other Great Lakes Senators in requesting and authorizing the report entitled the [Great Lakes & Mississippi River Interbasin Study](#).

“This study tells us that while we have been successful to date in warding off the invasion of Asian Carp, the pathways for Asian Carp and other invasive species to enter the Great Lakes are increasing,” said Durbin. “Though popular with some, complete separation of the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan would be one of the most costly water projects in the nation. I have seen too many of these long-term Corps projects languish for years and fall victim to Congressional inaction. We can’t gamble with the threat of Asian Carp invading the Great Lakes or risk severe flood damage to the Chicago Metropolitan area by pursuing a risky plan at the expense of our current efforts. I look forward to hearing public comments and input that seriously consider some of the more practical medium and long-term alternatives presented in today’s report.”

Senator Durbin has long been advocating for a more comprehensive approach to preventing the Asian Carp from reaching the Great Lakes.

In [December 2009 letters](#), Durbin urged leaders in the effort to prevent



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*- Dick Durbin (D-IL)*

the Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes to work together to establish and convey to Congress a long-term, comprehensive Asian carp eradication plan. Identical letters were sent to the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Shortly afterward, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife service worked through a collaborative process with multiple state and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, representatives of industry and academia and other stakeholders to create the Management and Control Plan for Asian carp. Durbin [has led efforts](#) in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee to adequately fund the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s plan.

In [January 2010](#), he and U.S. Representative Judy Biggert (R-IL) called a bipartisan, bicameral meeting to discuss a path forward in the effort to contain Asian carp in Illinois.

In a [June 2010 letter](#), Durbin asked President Obama to appoint a director for the effort to control the spread of Asian Carp. Shortly afterward, in September, [John Goss](#) was appointed head of the Asian Carp Regional

Coordinating Committee which is made up of the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. ACE, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Other participating agencies and organizations include the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission, the City of Chicago and the Metropolitan Waste Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

In 2003, Durbin began working with Biggert and the Army Corps of Engineers to authorize and fund three Aquatic Nuisance Species Dispersal Barriers along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal whose 100% federally funded cost was estimated at \$99 million. Since 2009, Durbin has worked with the Obama Administration to secure funding \$1.37 billion the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. These funds have been used for invasive species control, including \$37.9 million for Asian Carp prevention activities in FY2010. In 2011, he successfully fought House Republican attempts to cut Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding in FY 2011 by \$250 million. 🌐

## *Coast Guard Publishes STCW Final Rule, Plans January 23 Webinar*

On December 24, 2013, the U.S. Coast Guard published a final rule on implementation of the amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers. The rule incorporates the 1995 and 2010 amendments to the STCW Convention and makes other changes to U.S. regulations to harmonize them with STCW requirements.

The final rule also describes how a U.S. mariner may obtain an STCW endorsement, clarifies the requirements for each endorsement, and clarifies transitional provisions for STCW endorsements and medical certificates.

### **Training Requirements**

The rule specifies training requirements for each STCW endorsement, which include a combination of structured training and on-board assessments. The rule provides options for mariners to demonstrate competence under STCW outside of classroom training; allows service on the Great Lakes and inland waterways to be credited toward a portion of the sea time required to obtain an endorsement; and, preserves the “hawespipe” program for engineer training. The rule also mandates that certain training topics be covered as part of an approved formal training course, dependent upon the specific

endorsement the mariner is seeking. (The required training for each endorsement is outlined in Parts 11 and 12 of the final rule.)

Any mariner seeking an original credential or raise in grade of an existing credential who begins service or training before March 24, 2014, need only meet the requirements in place when they begin their service or training, with the exception of new training requirements covered by the 2010 amendments on topics including leadership and managerial skills and engineroom resource management. With certain exceptions, mariners with existing STCW endorsements do not need to comply immediately with the final rule. However, mariners who start their training or service on or after March 24, 2014 must comply fully with the requirements of the final rule when applying for a new credential or raise-of-grade.

### **Medical Requirements**

The final rule implements the STCW-mandated transition to a two-year medical certificate for all mariners subject to the Convention. While STCW does not require mariners to hold medical certificates until 2017, the Maritime Labor Convention, which took effect in August 2013, requires that mariners have a separate medical certificate issued by the flag

administration. For this reason, the Coast Guard will begin issuing medical certificates on January 24, 2014. Any mariner traveling to countries that have ratified the MLC is encouraged to apply for a medical certificate as soon as possible. Medical certificates will be issued separately from merchant mariner credentials. The Coast Guard also notes in the final rule that it has begun to consider developing a Designated Medical Examiner program to help expedite the STCW medical certification process. This project will be undertaken as a separate rulemaking.

### **Stakeholder Webinar/Public Meetings**

In order to help industry understand and comply with the final rule, the Coast Guard plans a series of meetings to describe the new requirements and answer stakeholder questions. The first meeting will be held by webinar on January 23 and AWO will provide further details to members as soon as they become available. An in-person meeting will follow in February.

The STCW final rule does not include new endorsements for Master of Towing (Utility) and Master of Towing (Harbor Assist) as proposed in the August 2011 supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking. The Coast Guard notes that it will consider these proposed endorsements either through a separate rulemaking, in consultation with the Towing Safety Advisory Committee, or both.

To read the final rule, click [here](#). To read a letter from the Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy describing the rulemaking, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Brian Vahey at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or [bvahey@vesselalliance.com](mailto:bvahey@vesselalliance.com).

## **Coast Guard Issues Updated Shipment and Discharge Forms for Mariners**

On December 20, the U.S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center announced that the Office of Management and Budget has approved updated versions of two Coast Guard forms that had been unchanged since the 1980s. Forms CG-705A (Shipping Articles) and CG-718A (Certificate of Discharge to Merchant Mariner) have been updated and will no longer be available on paper. The forms will still collect the same data and are now available in PDF format on the National Maritime Center [website](#).

## Coast Guard Approves Expansion of APC to Non-Tank Vessels

On January 7, the U.S. Coast Guard approved the expansion of [AWO's Alternative Planning Criterion](#) for emergency towing services to inland non-tank vessels over 400 Gross Register Tons. AWO members using the APC to meet the emergency towing requirements of the non-tank vessel response plan regulations must use the prescribed notification process in the event of an incident as described in the APC and abide by current regulatory requirements to exercise the entire vessel response plan every three years, including the AWO APC.

AWO requested the expansion of the APC to inland towing vessels following publication of final regulations for non-tank vessel response plans in September 2013. Like AWO member tank barge operators, AWO members operating inland towing vessels over 400 GRT can now use the APC to meet the emergency towing requirements of the response plan regulations through mutual assistance, rather than contracting with pre-arranged providers of emergency towing services. An AWO member wishing to use the APC to comply with the emergency towing requirements must indicate that in its vessel response plan.

In related news, on December 19, the Coast Guard issued a [Marine Safety Information Bulletin](#) stating that the agency will issue six-month Interim Operating Authority letters to non-tank vessel response plan holders as necessary. A vessel owner who is unable to meet all of the regulatory requirements for response plan approval may obtain an IOA by submitting a plan that includes the following minimum elements and identifying those elements of the plan that are incomplete:

- Identification of a qualified individual and alternate qualified individual;
- Identification of an oil spill removal organization by contract or written consent as appropriate;
- Identification of a salvage and marine firefighting provider and submission of a salvage contract and funding agreement or written consent agreement as appropriate; and,
- A signed certification statement as required by 33 CFR 155.5023(b).

Affected non-tank vessel owners or operators must submit their plans to the Coast Guard by January 30. For more information or to have your company listed as an APC supporter, please contact Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extension 279, or [bbennett@vesselalliance.com](mailto:bbennett@vesselalliance.com).

## Coast Guard Issues NPRM Reaffirming Regulatory Preemption

On December 27, the U.S. Coast Guard issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) containing its assessment framework for and restating its position regarding the federalism implications of regulations issued under Coast Guard authority in the United States Code. The Coast Guard believes that a clear agency statement of the preemptive impact of regulations will be of great benefit to state and local governments, the public, and regulated entities. They also note that preemption is important because consistent standards of universal application and enforcement best meet safety and environmental goals with the least disruption to maritime commerce. Statutes with preemptive effect include:



- Titles I and II of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act;
- 46 USC Chapter 32, which describes the regulatory regime for certain vessels that must comply with the International Safety Management Code;
- 46 USC Chapter 33, which includes vessel design, equipment, inspections and tests;
- 46 USC 3717 and 6101, which require marine safety information systems for tank vessels and casualty reporting; and,
- 33 USC 1901-1912 to the extent an international agreement creates a standard that is embodied in Coast Guard regulations.

Comments are due March 27. For more information please contact Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extension 279, or [bbennett@vesselalliance.com](mailto:bbennett@vesselalliance.com).

## REMINDER: Applications for RDML Richard E. Bennis Award Due January 30

### *Coast Guard Award Recognizes Outstanding Achievements in Maritime Security*

The U.S. Coast Guard is encouraging AWO member companies who are proud of their work in maritime security to submit an application for the first-ever RDML Richard E. Bennis Award for Excellence in Maritime Security. The Coast Guard will accept applications until January 30.

The award is open to any marine transportation-related organization owning, operating, or managing vessels, waterfront facilities, fleeting areas, or other any other entity engaged in maritime operations subject to Coast Guard maritime security regulations. There are three primary

award categories: Port Authority of the Year, Company of the Year, and Facility of the Year. The Coast Guard may elect to recognize more than one company in each category.

Applications will be evaluated by a panel of Coast Guard headquarters personnel based on an array of issues, including the organization's commitment to security partnerships, its success in establishing a strong security culture among its employees, and its processes for developing and managing security policies and procedures. For more information on how to apply for the award, click [here](#).

Mariners on towing vessels are vital force multipliers for the Coast Guard's maritime domain awareness and security work and act as the eyes and ears of the nation's rivers, coasts and harbors. That there has never been a major security incident involving a U.S.-flag tugboat, towboat, or barge is testament to the industry's commitment to security. AWO encourages all members to consider applying for the Bennis Award.

For more information, please contact Brian Vahey at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or [bvahey@vesselalliance.com](mailto:bvahey@vesselalliance.com).

## Coast Guard Issues Sunken Vessel Light Final Rule

On December 24, the Coast Guard issued a final rule allowing the Commandant, through a District Commander, to issue waivers of sunken vessel light requirements when there is no discernable threat to navigation or safety and the placing of a light is deemed impractical or impossible. Current law requires the owner of a vessel that is wrecked and sunk in a navigable channel to immediately mark it with a buoy or beacon during the day and a lighted buoy or beacon after dark.

This new final rule, authorized in the 2004 Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act, does not exempt vessels from the marking requirement, but does offer vessel owners the opportunity to seek a waiver of the lighted marker requirement at night if they receive permission from the cognizant District Commander. The Coast Guard cited potential savings of time and money for vessel operators as the impetus behind this rule change.

For more information on the final rule, contact Kevin Dowling at (703) 841-9300, extension 264, or [kdowling@vesselalliance.com](mailto:kdowling@vesselalliance.com).

## International Update: SOLAS Amendments and Caribbean ECA Take Effect

Several amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships took effect on January 1, 2014. Items relevant to AWO members include:

- An amendment to SOLAS Chapter V requiring nations to establish minimum safe manning levels and a corresponding document for every SOLAS vessel; and,
- Changes to MARPOL Annex VI creating the United States Caribbean Sea Emission Control Area, establishing stricter controls on emissions of sulfur oxide (SOx), nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter for vessels operating in waters off of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In both cases, compliance with current U.S. regulations mean that towing vessels operated by AWO members already meet or exceed these standards. For more information on these new international requirements, please contact Kevin Dowling at (703) 841-9300, extension 264 or [kdowling@vesselalliance.com](mailto:kdowling@vesselalliance.com).



## MARAD Seeks Input on Use of Foreign Launch Barge for Platform Jacket Transportation

On December 26, the U.S. Maritime Administration issued a [notice and request for comments](#) on a potential determination permitting the use of a foreign launch barge in support of a Platform Jacket launch operation if no

other suitable coastwise vessels are found to be available. The Walter Oil & Gas Corporation submitted a request seeking MARAD's permission to use a foreign launch barge in transporting and launching a Platform Jacket on the

Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Mexico. The Platform Jacket will be loaded at a facility to be determined in the Gulf of Mexico and unloaded in the Ewing Bank along the Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Mexico. Transport will occur between September and December 2015.

MARAD is requesting comments and information on the availability of coastwise qualified vessels for Platform Jacket launch by January 25 and the agency's goal is to provide a final determination by March 26 unless a suitable coastwise qualified vessel operator comes forward with a vessel and additional time is needed for negotiation. If, after the comment period, MARAD determines that a suitable coastwise qualified vessel is not available, a determination of non-availability will be issued allowing the foreign launch barge to transport the Platform Jacket.

If you have a qualified coastwise vessel, or want more information, please contact Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extension 279, or [bbennett@vesselalliance.com](mailto:bbennett@vesselalliance.com).



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