

MONTHLY REPORT for ICS

September 2024

NOTE TO THE READER: Reference to the Federal Register may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR>.

References to legislation may be found at <https://www.congress.gov> at the center of the page.

US National Maritime Strategy

Over the past decades, the US has experienced a significant reduction in the number of US flag vessels trading internationally as well as a significant reduction in US shipbuilding and repair capacity regarding both military and commercial vessels. These reductions are seen as a serious threat not only to the viability of the US flagged commercial maritime fleet but also to the ability of the US flag fleet to meet the needs of the US military sealift capacity should a forward deployment of military resources be needed. In addition, issues around mariner shortage/recruitment/retention have resulted in increasing concerns about the current shortage of US mariners to adequately crew US flag vessels in the US flag international trading fleet to levels necessary to meet both economic and military needs.

Under the leadership of MARAD, the US executive branch agencies are near completion of a National Maritime Strategy to address these concerns. Also given the awareness of certain Members of Congress on these issues, CSA has been engaged with Congressional staff on what, if any, legislative action would be required to address these concerns. We expect comprehensive legislation to be introduced before year-end which will (1) establish national oversight and consistent funding for the US maritime industry, (2) provide support and incentive programs to promote an increase of US flag vessels in international trade, (3) provide support to the US shipbuilding industry, and (4) expand and strengthen maritime workforce development to boost mariner and shipyard worker recruitment, training and retention. A workshop hosted by ABS, which CSA will attend, is scheduled for Fall 2024 with representatives from the shipping and shipbuilding industry, maritime labor, the Executive Branch and representatives from a number of Members of Congress.

US EPA – VIDA Regulations Finalized

On Friday, September 20, 2024, the EPA Administrator issued the EPA’s final rule *Vessel Incidental Discharge National Standards of Performance* pursuant to the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (commonly referred to as “VIDA”) to establish national standards of performance for incidental discharges from primarily commercial vessels 79 feet in length and above into the waters of the United States or the waters of the contiguous zone. The rule includes both general standards and specific standards for 20 separate discharges from systems and equipment onboard vessels. The rule also includes procedures for states to follow if they choose to petition the EPA for more stringent discharge requirements, including to issue an emergency order; to review any standard of performance, regulation or policy; to request additional requirements with respect to discharges in the Great Lakes; or to apply to the EPA to prohibit one or more types of vessel discharges into specified waters to provide greater environmental protection.

VIDA requires the U.S. Coast Guard to develop corresponding implementation, compliance, and enforcement regulations, including requirements governing the design, construction, testing, approval, installation, and use of devices to achieve the EPA standards within two years after publication of this EPA rule in the *Federal Register*. Until both the EPA and the USCG regulations are final, effective, and enforceable, vessels continue to be subject to the existing discharge requirements established in EPA’s 2013 Vessel General Permit and the USCG’s ballast water regulations, as well as any other applicable state and local government requirements.

EPA expects the final rule to be published soon in the *Federal Register*. In the meantime a 300 page plus pre-publication version is available on EPA’s website at [Commercial Vessel Discharge Standards | US EPA](#) CSA is currently reviewing and analyzing this document but will not distribute our final analysis until the rule is published in the Federal Register in order to provide relevant section and page references for future discussions. This analysis and the Federal Register version of the rule will be included in our upcoming meeting documents and will be discussed at next month’s Policy and Operations Committee meeting.

U.S. Maritime Advisory

[U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-012- Black Sea and Sea of Azov-Military Combat Operations](#)