

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters Office of Public Affairs
Public Affairs Guidance (PAG)

Event: Waterways Analysis and Management System (WAMS) report for the Pacific Seacoast System

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Background: The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting an assessment of the Pacific Seacoast System, the second in a series of studies to determine the navigation requirements for mariners in the U.S. Marine Transportation System (MTS).

The Waterways Analysis and Management System (WAMS) study will help the Coast Guard to determine the Aids to Navigation (ATON) requirements in the Pacific Seacoast System, which includes U.S. waterways from the Canadian border to the Mexican border and around Alaska, Hawaii and the Marianas Islands. The seacoast system is covered by the four U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area districts in Alameda, California (District 11); Seattle, Washington (District 13), Honolulu, Hawaii (District 14); and Juneau, Alaska (District 17).

The WAMS study is focused on providing consistent, program-wide policy necessary to support Coast Guard District Commanders ATON services within the Pacific Seacoast System. The recommendations will not determine what aids to add, keep, or remove, but they will shape policy for the next generation waterway system management and design.

In accordance with International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) considerations, the Coast Guard will evaluate the seacoast system based on current common shipping lanes, user data from the Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS), training and carriage requirements, available technology other than carriage, environmental conditions, and ATON discrepancies. Analysis of these items will be augmented with a survey of waterway stakeholders and mariners.

The assessment is part of the Future of Navigation initiative, the U.S. Coast Guard's effort to make American waterways safer, more efficient and more resilient.

The other MTS systems to be studied are the Intracoastal Waterway and Western Rivers as well as Deep Draft Waterway Systems (maintained and unmaintained) and Shallow Draft Waterway Systems (maintained and unmaintained).

Messages:

- The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting a study of the Pacific Seacoast System designed to update its policy governing waterway design criteria and national Aids to Navigation levels of service to promote the safety of future maritime transportation on U.S. waters.
- Our waterways have become increasingly more congested and complex. While the number and size of the vessels traveling through the U.S. Marine Transportation System has increased, the number and size of U.S. navigation corridors has not.
- To address these changes and determine navigation requirements for the Pacific Seacoast System, the Coast Guard will consider feedback from national, regional, and local maritime partners on the Pacific Seacoast System.
- The Coast Guard will examine many factors to determine the optimal waterway design, including waterway, vessel and boat characteristics; waterway users; main cargo; available technology; and environmental considerations.
- This study is part of the U.S. Coast Guard's Future of Navigation initiative, a nationwide effort to make American waterways safer, more efficient and more resilient.
- The Coast Guard will keep the public and maritime community informed of any new information or opportunities to provide input.
- The Coast Guard is committed to enabling the safe and efficient movement of vessels in the Maritime Transportation System, the vast and vital U.S. waterways system which guides thousands of vessels, millions of mariners and trillions of trade into U.S. ports.
- Our top priority will always be safety of life at sea and this study supports that objective.

Questions/Answers:

Q1. Why is the Coast Guard conducting the Pacific Seacoast System assessment?

A1. Our waterways have become increasingly more congested and complex. While the number and size of the vessels traveling through the U.S. Marine Transportation System has increased, the number and size of U.S. navigation corridors has not. To address these changes and determine navigation requirements for the Pacific Seacoast System, the Coast Guard is conducting a Waterways Analysis and Management System study of the entire Pacific Short Range Aids to Navigation system within U.S. territorial waters from the Canadian border to the Mexican border and around Alaska, Hawaii and the Marianas Islands. This assessment will help the Coast Guard to determine the optimal levels of service for the seacoast system.

Q2. What can the public expect from the Coast Guard during this assessment?

R2. This is a review of the Pacific Seacoast System. A project plan has been developed, which includes stakeholder and public outreach, an analysis of data and outreach results, a final report detailing the findings and recommendations, proposed changes, additional outreach on these proposals, and recommendations. Any proposed changes to the waterways will be published in the Local Notice to Mariners and shared with stakeholders through a variety of forums. The Pacific Seacoast System is unrestricted without specific boundaries or controlling depth. The system is typically transited by vessels on an ocean voyage or by those transiting along the coast. Aids to Navigation in these unrestricted waterways are generally used for geographic reference or to mark specific hazards to navigation.

Q3. How will the general public and other stakeholders get to have a say in this process?

R3. The general public will be given an opportunity to provide feedback in response to official solicitation published in the Local Notice to Mariners. To provide feedback to the Pacific Seacoast WAMS study, you need to access the online feedback tool at the following link (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PacSeacoastWAMS>). If unable to access the web-based feedback link, a paper copy may be obtained through the local Coast Guard District office. Please return this feedback form to your corresponding District office. They will then manually enter the data into the online feedback tool. You may also provide feedback in person to your Sector or District point of contact.

Q4. Will Aids to Navigation (lighthouses, buoys, RACONs, sound signals, etc.) be removed based on this study?

R4. No aids are being added, removed or changed at this time unless it is an immediate concern for safe navigation. This is a study of our current system to validate the user requirements and determine how to best to enhance the U.S. ATON System. The goal of this assessment is to update Coast Guard policy governing waterway design criteria, enhance mariner situational awareness and redefine levels of service that will promote safety of future maritime transportation on U.S. navigable waters.

Q5. What is the timeline for solicitation of public comment?

R5. Public comment can be submitted from Dec. 4, 2017 to March 31, 2018, via Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PacSeacoastWAMS>) and in person. We will consider all feedback from our maritime partners related to the Pacific Seacoast System and address those concerns as we redefine national levels of service and waterway design criteria.

Q6. Can I be held liable for answering these questions, despite carriage requirements and licenses, etc., that may be required statutorily if I am not following said requirements?

R6. All information, facts and opinions are anonymous, unless the individual specifically requests to be contacted or volunteers their personal information. No personal contact information will be requested. We will consider all feedback from our national, regional, and local maritime partners related to the Pacific Seacoast System and address those concerns as we redefine national levels of service and waterway design criteria.

Q7. Is the information that we provide anonymous?

R7. All information, facts, or opinions are anonymous, unless the individual specifically requests to be contacted or volunteers their personal information. No personal contact information will be requested. We will consider all feedback from our national, regional, and local maritime partners related to the Pacific Seacoast System and address those concerns as we redefine national levels of service and waterway design criteria.

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