



Press Release

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COAST GUARD ESTABLISHES MANDATORY BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard published regulations today establishing a national mandatory ballast water management program for all vessels equipped with ballast water tanks that enter or operate within U.S. waters.

These regulations also require vessels to maintain a ballast water management plan that is specific for that vessel and allows any master or appropriate official to understand and execute the ballast water management strategy for that vessel. These regulations increase the Coast Guard's ability to prevent the introduction of non-indigenous species via ballast water as required by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act and the National Invasive Species Act.

"The establishment of a nationwide mandatory ballast water management program is a major step by the Coast Guard in protecting our environment, food supply, economy, health and overall biodiversity from the impacts of non-indigenous species," said Capt. David Scott, chief of the Coast Guard's office of operating and environmental standards.

"Studies have shown that ballast water is a major pathway for the introduction of non-native species into U.S. coastal waters," said Lori Williams, executive director of the National Invasive Species Council. NISC is a Cabinet-level group composed of the secretaries or directors of 12 Departments and Agencies charged with providing leadership to all federal programs on invasive species issues. "The Coast Guard is an important member of NISC, and we congratulate all involved with the development of this regulation which should help aid in the prevention of future introductions and spread of potentially invasive species."

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recently stated support for a national ballast water management program in its preliminary report. Future Coast Guard regulations may outline specific ballast water discharge standards, and approval procedures for ballast water treatment systems.

More information on the Coast Guard's ballast water management program can be found at: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mso/ans.htm>. This final rule can be found at: <http://dms.dot.gov>. In this web site, proceed to simple search, and under docket number, enter 14273.

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