



16711 / Serial No. 1600
November 22, 2017

Offshore Marine Service Association (OMSA)
Attn: Mr. Aaron C. Smith
The New Orleans Exchange Centre
935 Gravier St, Ste 2040
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Mr. Smith,

We have carefully considered the information you presented at our meeting on November 13, 2017. As I noted during the meeting, OMSA and the Offshore Supply Vessel (OSV) fleet you represent provide our nation a great service. OSVs have the capabilities to conduct the wide spectrum of operations that are necessary to allow our nation to profit from the exploration, exploitation, and production of offshore minerals and energy resources.

We have been in contact with FEMA through the Seventh Coast Guard District and understand that there are a sufficient number of certificated vessels that are authorized to carry cargo, supplies, and passengers to assist with the recovery efforts without having to waive any tonnage or service requirements. Should conditions change that necessitate more vessels or a specific vessel is needed to perform a function for which there is no other vessel that meets the applicable regulations, we are willing to review a waiver request on a case-by-case basis.

Your letter contained multiple waiver and equivalency requests. Each is addressed below:

1. Vessels certificated under Subchapter T and Subchapter I are permitted to transport and discharge passengers and hurricane relief, restoration, and recovery cargo to Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) as outlined on the vessel's COI. However, an OSV certificated under only 46 CFR Subchapter L, or an existing OSV certificated under Subchapter I, may not carry cargo or passengers to Puerto Rico or the USVI as this is not a service in support of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) activities.
2. A voyage between Puerto Rico or the USVI and the continental U.S. is not an international voyage. Subchapter I uses the standards within SOLAS to provide a level of safety that is consistent with a vessel on an international voyage. While this requires a vessel to obtain and maintain SOLAS certificates, we have granted single voyage exemptions, as outlined in CVC Policy Letter 17-06 CH-1.
3. Bulk liquid cargo may be carried on, and transferred from, a vessel that meets the applicable portions of Subchapter I. If flammable or combustible liquid cargo is to be carried, Subchapter I restricts the amount to "limited quantities". Per the Marine Safety Manual, Volume II, Section B, C.4, "limited quantities" must not exceed 20 percent of the vessel's deadweight

November 22, 2017

tonnage. This cargo must be carried in spaces that meet the double hull requirements of 33 CFR 157.10d.

4. The double hull standards in 33 CFR 157.10d have long been adopted and proven effective as a primary means to prevent marine pollution from a vessel carrying oil in bulk. OSVs operating as a freight or industrial vessel that carry fuel oil in bulk, as cargo, for distribution must meet the applicable double hull requirements.

5. OSV crewing provisions in CG-MMC Policy Letter 02-17 are provided as an option for the OCMI to facilitate maritime commerce. The Coast Guard places the regulatory authority for vessel inspection activities with the local OCMI. These officers are in the best position to observe vessel operations and make allowances for vessels based on a unique local environment. If a vessel owner or operator feels as though the OCMI is not using this guidance appropriately, I recommend that the owner or operator exercise the appeal process established within 46 CFR 1.03.

6. OCMI's are authorized to endorse or amend OSV's COI's to ensure vessels operate safely. As discussed above, OCMI's are uniquely positioned to provide the best determination regarding the safety of the vessel. They have the flexibility to establish equivalencies and grant waivers for a variety of construction and operating requirements.

Should you have questions or concerns, please contact my staff at (202) 372-1215 or CG-CVC-1@uscg.mil.

Sincerely,



J. P. Nadeau
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy