

notice in the **Federal Register** prior to the meeting.

6. A transcript of the public meeting will be made available via our Web site at <http://www.MARAD.dot.gov> and posted to the docket at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The recorded webcast video will remain available following the meeting via a link from our Web site at [www.MARAD.dot.gov](http://www.MARAD.dot.gov).

#### Privacy Act Statement

Anyone is able to search all comments entered into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19476, 04/11/2011) or at <http://www.dot.gov/privacy.html>.

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 610; E.O., 13563, 76 FR 3821, Jan. 21 2011; E.O. 12866, 58 FR 51735, Oct. 4, 1993.

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Dated: October 23, 2013.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

**Julie Agarwal,**

*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2013-25396 Filed 10-25-13; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-81-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

#### Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement Open Season

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of open season for enrollment in the VISA program.

**SUMMARY:** The Maritime Administration (MARAD) announces that the open season for Fiscal Year 2014 applications for participation in the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) program will run for 30 days beginning today and ending November 27, 2013. The purpose of this notice is to invite interested, qualified U.S.-flag vessel operators that are not currently enrolled in the VISA program to apply. This is the only planned enrollment period for carriers to join the VISA program and derive benefits for Department of Defense (DOD) peacetime contracts initiated during the period from October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014.

Any U.S.-flag vessel operator organized under the laws of a state of the United States, or the District of Columbia, who is able and willing to commit militarily useful sealift assets and assume the related consequential

risks of commercial disruption, may be eligible to participate in the VISA program.

The mission of VISA is to provide commercial sealift and intermodal shipping services and systems, including vessels, vessel space, intermodal systems and equipment, terminal facilities, and related management services, to the Department of Defense (DOD), as necessary, to meet national defense contingency requirements or national emergencies. Carriers enrolled in the VISA program provide DOD with assured access to such services during contingencies. In return for their VISA commitment, DOD gives VISA participants priority for peacetime cargos.

**DATES:** VISA Program applications must be received on or before November 27, 2013.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit applications and questions related to this notice to Jerome D. Davis, Director, Office of Sealift Support, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone (202) 366-0688; Fax (202) 366-5904.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jerome D. Davis, Director, Office of Sealift Support, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone (202) 366-0688; Fax (202) 366-5904, or visit <http://www.marad.dot.gov>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The VISA program was established pursuant to Section 708 of the Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended (DPA). The VISA program was created to provide for voluntary agreements for emergency preparedness programs. Pursuant to the DPA, voluntary agreements for preparedness programs, including the VISA program expire five (5) years after the date they became effective.

The VISA program is open to U.S.-flag vessel operators of oceangoing militarily useful vessels, to include tugs and barges. An operator is defined as an owner or bareboat charterer of a vessel. Tug enrollment alone does not satisfy VISA eligibility. Operators include vessel owners and bareboat charter operators if satisfactory signed agreements are in place committing the assets of the owner to VISA. Voyage and space charterers are not considered U.S.-flag vessel operators for purposes of VISA eligibility.

### VISA Concept

The VISA program provides for the staged, time-phased availability of participants' shipping services/systems through pre-negotiated contracts between the Government and participants. Such arrangements are jointly planned with the MARAD, USTRANSCOM, and participants in peacetime to allow effective and best valued use of commercial sealift capacity, provide DOD assured contingency access, and to minimize commercial disruption.

There are three time-phased stages in the event of VISA activation. VISA Stages I and II provide for pre-negotiated contracts between DOD and participants to provide sealift capacity to meet all projected DOD contingency requirements. These contracts are executed in accordance with approved DOD contracting methodologies. VISA Stage III provides for additional capacity to DOD when Stages I and II commitments or volunteered capacity are insufficient to meet contingency requirements, and adequate shipping services from non-participants are not available through established DOD contracting practices or U.S. Government treaty agreements.

### Exceptions to This Open Season

The only exception to this open season period for VISA enrollment will be for a non-VISA carrier that reflags a vessel into U.S. registry. That carrier may submit an application to participate in the VISA program at any time upon completion of reflagging.

### Advantages of Peacetime Participation

In return for their VISA commitment, DOD awards peacetime cargo contracts to VISA participants on a priority basis. Award of DOD cargoes to meet DOD peacetime and contingency requirements is made on the basis of the following priorities: U.S.-flag vessel capacity operated by VISA participants and U.S.-flag Vessel Sharing Agreement (VSA) capacity held by VISA participants; U.S.-flag vessel capacity operated by non-participants; Combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag vessel capacity operated by VISA participants, and combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag VSA capacity held by VISA participants; Combination U.S.-flag/foreign-flag vessel capacity operated by non-participants; U.S.-owned or operated foreign-flag vessel capacity and VSA capacity held by VISA participants; U.S.-owned or operated foreign-flag vessel capacity and VSA capacity held by non-participants; and

Foreign-owned or operated foreign-flag vessel capacity of non-participants.

### Participation

Applicants must provide satisfactory evidence that the vessels being committed to the VISA program are operational and are intended to be operated by the applicant in the carriage of commercial or government preference cargoes. Operator is defined as an ocean common carrier or contract carrier that owns, controls or manages vessels by which ocean transportation is provided. While vessel brokers, freight forwarders, and agents play an important role as a conduit to locate and secure appropriate vessels for the carriage of DOD cargo, they are not eligible to participate in the VISA program due to lack of requisite vessel ownership or operation.

### Commitment

Any U.S.-flag vessel operator desiring to receive priority consideration for DOD peacetime contracts must commit no less than 50 percent of its total U.S.-flag militarily useful capacity in Stage III of the VISA program. Participants operating vessels in international trade may receive top tier consideration in the award of DOD peacetime contracts by committing the minimum percentages of capacity to all three stages of VISA or bottom tier consideration by committing the minimum percentage of capacity to only Stage III of VISA. USTRANSCOM and MARAD will coordinate to ensure that the amount of sealift assets committed to Stages I and II will not have an adverse national economic impact. To minimize domestic commercial disruption, participants operating vessels exclusively in the domestic Jones Act trades are not required to commit the capacity of those U.S. domestic trading vessels to VISA Stages I and II. Overall VISA commitment requirements are based on annual enrollment.

In order to protect a U.S.-flag vessel operator's market share during contingency activation, VISA allows participants to join with other vessel operators in Carrier Coordination Agreements (CCAs) to satisfy commercial or DOD requirements. VISA provides a defense against antitrust laws in accordance with the DPA. CCAs must be submitted to the MARAD for coordination with the Department of Justice for approval, before they can be utilized.

### Vessel Position Reporting

If VISA applicants have the capability to track their vessels, they must include the tracking system used in their VISA application. Such applicants are

required to provide MARAD access to their vessel tracking systems upon approval of their VISA application. If VISA applicants do not have a tracking system, they must indicate this in their VISA application. The VISA program requires enrolled ships to comply with 46 CFR Part 307, Establishment of Mandatory Position Reporting System for Vessels.

### Compensation

In addition to receiving priority in the award of DOD peacetime cargo, a participant will receive compensation during contingency activation for that capacity activated under Stage I, II and III. The amount of compensation will depend on the Stage at which capacity is activated. During enrollment, each participant must select one of several compensation methodologies. The compensation methodology selection will be completed with the appropriate DOD agency, resulting in prices in contingency contracts between DOD and the participant.

### Security Clearances

All VISA applicants accepted for VISA participation, not having a Facility Security Clearance (FCL), will be required to pursue the clearance process with the Defense Security Service (DSS). If the accepted applicant does not have a clearance, MARAD and USTRANSCOM will initiate the clearance process with DSS. Participants must have a FCL and security clearances at a minimum of SECRET level for key personnel in order for them to participate in the VISA Joint Planning Advisory Group (JPAG) meetings and to meet VISA contingency contract obligations. One of the objectives of the JPAG is to provide the USTRANSCOM, MARAD and VISA participants a planning forum to analyze DOD contingency sealift/intermodal service and resource requirements against industry commitments. JPAG meetings are often SECRET classified sessions. Eligibility for VISA participation will be terminated if an applicant is rejected for a facility clearance or if it fails to progress in a timely manner in the clearance process.

### Application for VISA Participation

New applicants may apply to participate by obtaining a VISA application package (Form MA-1020 (OMB Approval No. 2133-0532)) from the Director, Office of Sealift Support. Form MA-1020 includes instructions for completing and submitting the application, blank VISA Application forms and a request for information regarding the operations and U.S.

citizenship of the applicant company. A copy of the VISA document as published in the **Federal Register** on March 24, 2010, will also be provided with the package. This information is needed in order to assist MARAD in making a determination of the applicant's eligibility. An applicant company must provide an affidavit that demonstrates that the company is qualified to document a vessel under 46 U.S.C. 12103, and that it owns, or bareboat charters and controls, oceangoing, militarily useful vessel(s) for purposes of committing assets to the VISA program.

New VISA applicants are required to submit their applications for the VISA program as described in this Notice no later than 30 days after the date of publication of this **Federal Register** notice. Applicants must provide the following: U.S. citizenship documentation; Copy of their Articles of Incorporation and/or By Laws; Copies of loadline documents from a recognized classification society to validate oceangoing vessel capability; U.S. Coast Guard Certificates of Documentation for all vessels in their fleet; Copy of Bareboat Charters, if applicable, valid through the period of enrollment, which state that the owner will not interfere with the charterer's obligation to commit chartered vessel(s) to the VISA program for the duration of the charter; and Copy of Time Charters, valid through the period of enrollment, for tug services to barge operators, if sufficient tug service is not owned or bareboat chartered by the VISA applicant. Barge operators must provide evidence to MARAD that tug service of sufficient horsepower will be available for all barges enrolled in the VISA program.

Approved VISA participants will be responsible for ensuring that information submitted with their application remains up to date beyond the approval process. Any changes to VISA commitments must be reported to MARAD and USTRANSCOM not later than seven days after the change. If charter agreements are due to expire, participants must provide MARAD with charters that extend the charter duration for another 12 months or longer.

Once MARAD has reviewed the application and determined VISA eligibility, MARAD will sign the VISA application document which completes the eligibility phase of the VISA enrollment process.

After VISA eligibility is approved by MARAD, approved applicants are required to execute a VISA contingency contract with USTRANSCOM. The USTRANSCOM VISA contract will specify the following: Participant's

Stage III commitment, and appropriate Stage I and/or II commitments for the period October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014; Drytime Contingency terms and conditions; and Liner Contingency terms and conditions, if applicable.

Execution of the USTRANSCOM VISA contract completes the enrollment process and establishes the approved applicant as a VISA Participant. The Maritime Administration reserves the right to revalidate all eligibility requirements without notice.

USTRANSCOM reserves the right to revalidate eligibility for VISA priority for DOD business at any time without notice.

**Authority:** 49 CFR 1.92 and 1.93.

\* \* \* \* \*

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.  
Dated: October 22, 2013.

**Julie P. Agarwal,**  
*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2013-25376 Filed 10-25-13; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2013-0040; Notice 1]

#### General Motors, LLC, Receipt of Petition for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Receipt of Petition.

**SUMMARY:** General Motors, LLC (GM) has determined that certain model year (MY) 2013 Chevrolet Cruze, Chevrolet Volt, and Buick Verano passenger cars manufactured between November 15, 2012 and January 11, 2013, do not fully comply with paragraph S4.2.6 of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 202a, *Head Restraints; Mandatory Applicability Begins on September 1, 2009*. GM has filed an appropriate report dated February 15, 2013, pursuant to 49 CFR part 573, *Defect and Noncompliance Responsibility and Reports*.

**DATES:** November 27, 2013.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments on this petition. Comments must refer to the docket and notice number cited at the beginning of this notice and be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **Mail:** Send comments by mail addressed to: U.S. Department of

Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- **Hand delivery:** Deliver comments by hand to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Section is open on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Federal Holidays.

- **Electronically:** Submit comments electronically by: logging onto the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Web site at <http://www.regulations.gov/>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Comments may also be faxed to (202) 493-2251.

Comments must be written in the English language, and be no greater than 15 pages in length, although there is no limit to the length of necessary attachments to the comments. If comments are submitted in hard copy form, please ensure that two copies are provided. If you wish to receive confirmation that your comments were received, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard with the comments. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov/>, including any personal information provided.

Documents submitted to a docket may be viewed by anyone at the address and times given above. The documents may also be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/> by following the online instructions for accessing the dockets. DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement is available for review in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000, (65 FR 19477-78).

The petition, supporting materials, and all comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be filed and will be considered. All comments and supporting materials received after the closing date will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the petition is granted or denied, notice of the decision will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**I. GM's Petition:** Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30118(d) and 30120(h) (see implementing rule at 49 CFR part 556), GM submitted a petition for an exemption from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301 on the basis that this noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

This notice of receipt of GM's petition is published under 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120 and does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgment concerning the merits of the petition.

**II. Vehicles Involved:** Affected are approximately 32,838 MY 2013 Chevrolet Cruze, Chevrolet Volt, and Buick Verano passenger cars manufactured between November 15, 2012 and January 11, 2013.

**III. Noncompliance:** GM explains that the noncompliance is that between 8 and 12 percent of the affected vehicles have rear outboard head restraints that do not meet the height retention requirements specified in paragraph S4.2.6 of FMVSS No. 202a.

GM further explained that the noncompliance is the result of a notch in one of the two head restraint rods not being machined to specifications. This notch corresponds to the rear head restraint's highest adjustment position. This condition does not affect the ability to lock the head restraint in the middle or lowest positions. Nor does it make the head restraint capable of being more easily removed.

**IV. Rule Text:** Paragraph S4.2.6 of FMVSS 202a specifically states:

S4.2.6 Height retention. When tested in accordance with S5.2.6 of this section, the cylindrical test device specified in S5.2.6(b) must return to within 13 mm of its initial reference position after application of at least a 500 N load and subsequent reduction of the load to 50 N  $\pm$  1 N. During application of the initial 50 N reference load, as specified in S5.2.6(b)(2) of this section, the cylindrical test device must not move downward more than 25 mm.

**V. Summary of GM's Analysis:** GM stated its belief that the subject noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety for the following reasons:

The root cause of the condition was determined to be a change made by a machine operator which reduced the clamping force in the operation that cuts the notches in the head restraint rod, slightly altering the shape of the notch. Restraints with the altered notch have a lower retention force than design intent.

The retention force for the head restraints with the improperly machined notch was measured as approximately 150 N.

GM recognizes that one of NHTSA's concerns was improper positioning of head restraints due to the head restraint moving out of position either during normal vehicle use or in a crash, as stated in the FMVSS No. 202a NPRM (January 4, 2001, 66 FR 979).

For everyday use, with the adjustment button depressed, these head restraints