



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Maritime Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 21, 2022

OIRA Desk Officer for DOT/MARAD
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) requests emergency processing of a request for approval of a collection of information concerning MARAD's Tanker Security Program (TSP).

The Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (FY20 NDAA) Fuel Tanker Study, conducted by the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), examined the sufficiency of the U.S.-flag tanker fleet to meet National Defense Strategy (NDS) requirements. The report's summary found a substantial risk to the nation's defense associated with a heavy reliance on foreign-flagged tankers. The location, timing, and specific missions associated with some tanker requirements dictate the need for U.S.-flagged assets, for which there currently are insufficient numbers available. The report's gap analysis found a clear and critical need to: increase U.S.-flag tanker capacity, reduce the risk of reliance on foreign-flagged tankers for the most important fuel missions, and ensure the DoD has sufficient tanker capabilities to meet NDS objectives.

The FY21 NDAA responded to this critical need for U.S.-flag tanker capacity by authorizing the creation of a new TSP. The FY21 NDAA directed that the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, establish a fleet of active, commercially viable, militarily useful, privately owned product tankers to meet national defense and other security requirements and maintain a United States presence in international commercial shipping. To meet the current national security demand, and heightened level of DoD interest, MARAD is acting quickly to ensure its ability to notice, accept, and process applications followed by the review and execution of supporting agreements with qualified vessel operators.

The USTRANSCOM Combatant Commander has stated that the capabilities the TSP tanker fleet will bring are a high priority as the DoD rapidly evolves operations to match fully contested conflicts in the Indo-Pacific and North Atlantic with pacing threats from China and Russia. Department of Defense leadership has stated that the 10-ship TSP tanker fleet is a solid start, recognizing a need for more than the initial 10 ships. In addition, DoD is indicating a high degree of urgency in MARAD implementing this new authority, which will support critical

USTRANSCOM bulk petroleum objectives. DoD points to an urgent need for tankers, especially with respect to the carriage of fuel that DoD forces rely on.

This collection of information has been designed to require the minimum amount of information necessary for product tank vessel selection and administration of the TSP. Program participant operational certification, payment voucher, and financial report submissions are included in the proposed collection of information to monitor participant compliance with program requirements. In order to provide DoD with assured access to U.S.-flag sealift capacity, a timely collection will help promote U.S.-flag tankers and ensure their availability during armed conflicts and other emergencies.

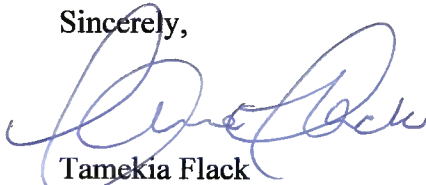
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and its implementing regulations at 5 CFR 1320.13, *Emergency Processing*, MARAD respectfully requests emergency processing for a collection of information that is critical to awarding Tanker Security Program Operating Agreements. In accordance with Section 3511(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Pub. L. 116-283), MARAD must accept applications for TSP Operating Agreements within 60 days of Congress appropriating funds for TSP and must award TSP Operating Agreements within 90 days of the application period closing. The Tanker Security Program was appropriated funding on March 15, 2022, under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, which provided \$60,000,000 in funding for the program. Thus, OMB emergency processing approval is necessary to avoid any further delay beyond the statutory June 15, 2022, deadline for MARAD to begin accepting applications.

Following product tank vessel selections and award, DoD and MARAD plan to commence operation of approved vessels under TSP Operating Agreements as soon as practicable. MARAD must also have the appropriate billing and information processes approved and ready to implement on the first day of the TSP Operating Agreement. Congress appropriated funds for TSP, and time is limited to make vessel selections. For the reasons stated, MARAD cannot wait the normal period for the information collection notice and comment process. Upon your approval and issuance of an information collection number, MARAD will begin to solicit and accept TSP applications for processing. MARAD is, therefore, requesting OMB approval of this collection of information as soon as possible.

Concurrent with OMB clearance of its emergency clearance request, MARAD will continue policy development and follow the normal clearance procedures for an information collection to implement the Tanker Security Program.

If you would like to discuss this request further, please contact Mitch Hudson at 202-302-7223 or at mitch.hudson@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



Tamekia Flack
Chief Counsel

Enclosures