

**Subject: PLAN TO LICENSE OPERATORS OF FEDERALLY DOCUMENTED
COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY VESSELS OF LESS THAN 200
GROSS TONS**

Submitted by: G-MVP

Issue:

Commercial fishing is an extremely dangerous endeavor with a historically poor safety record. Nearly 100 lives are lost annually in the commercial fishing industry. The Coast Guard considers the increase of professional competency of vessel operators to have the most promise for improving the current safety record.

Background:

The Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-424), required the Coast Guard to submit a plan to Congress to license operators of federally documented commercial fishing industry vessels.

◆ On January 13, 1992, the Coast Guard in close consultation with the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Advisory Committee (CFIVAC), submitted a plan to Congress for licensing operators of federally documented uninspected commercial fishing vessels of less than 200 gross tons.

◆ This plan calls for an innovative licensing system to allow the Coast Guard to approve and authorize training organizations and third parties to examine and certify individuals as meeting the professional knowledge and skill levels required for a license.

On May 19, 1993, the Secretary of Transportation submitted a legislative proposal that would amend Title 46 USC Chapter 89 to require all federally documented uninspected commercial fishing industry vessels to be operated by an individual licensed by the USCG.

Discussion:

The CFIVAC licensing plan:

- ◆ Will reduce casualties caused by human error, the primary purpose of the proposal.
- ◆ Will improve professional competency among fishing industry vessel operators.
- ◆ Allows the Coast Guard to approve third party training and certification of individuals for fishing industry vessel operations.
- ◆ Minimizes the burden on the fishing industry and the Coast Guard's licensing resources.

To help educate the fishing and training industries about the licensing plan, the Coast Guard produced an eight minute video, "Licensing...A Step Toward Safety at Sea," that illustrates the dangers of the fishing industry and promotes the safety benefits.

We have provided a copy of this video for your information. The video explains:

- ◆ How the licensing plan will be implemented.
- ◆ How the Coast Guard is working with the fishing industry by encouraging remote/third party training and allowing applications by mail and extensive grandfathering.

Action:

To market the legislative proposal, the Coast Guard is:

- ◆ Forwarding, under four and two star letters, copies of the video to selected Members of Congress, members of CFIVAC, MERPAC, NOSAC and NAVSAC.
- ◆ Conducting briefings for key Congressional staffers on the issue's importance and the need to implement legislation for the training and licensing of fishing industry vessels. Briefings will incorporate the video and will be Congressional region specific, by including notable casualties categorized by location and by human factors.