

Waterways Commerce Cutter Information Session and Virtual Meeting



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

- Please remain on mute until invited to speak during question and answer session following the formal presentation.
- Presentation Questions and Comments:
 - If using Microsoft Teams, type your question into the chat box at any time.
 - If calling in, we will invite you to ask questions at minute 30, after the presentation.
 - Additional questions and comments may be submitted to: HQS-SMB-CG-WaterwaysCommerceCutter@uscg.mil
 - These questions will not be read during the presentation.
- Alternatively comments may be submitted through the Federal Decision-Making portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, using the search function for Waterways Commerce Cutter or by docket number USCG-2021-0191.

SUBMIT COMMENTS:

Federal Decision-Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>

Waterways Commerce Cutter Information Session and Virtual Meeting

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard



USCG WCC Draft PEIS



SUBMIT COMMENTS:

Federal Decision-Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>

Meeting Agenda

Formal Presentation, approximately 30 minutes

- Process Overview
- Proposed Action – Preferred Alternative Details
- Proposed Action Areas
- Proposed Action Stressors
- Environmental Resources & Impacts – Physical
- Environmental Resources & Impacts – Biological
- Socioeconomic Resources & Impacts
- Prospective Timeline for PEIS Completion

Question and Answer Period, approximately 30 minutes

SUBMIT COMMENTS:

Federal Decision-Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>

Regulatory Process & Timeline



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Enacted in 1969, NEPA requires all federal agencies to consider environmental impacts that may result from a proposed action, inform the public of potential impacts and alternatives, and facilitate public involvement in the assessment process.

Other Applicable Environmental Laws

- The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and/or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service regarding potential impacts to any endangered species in the proposed action areas.
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires consideration of any potential impacts of the Proposed Action on marine mammals, their habitats, or their behavior.
- The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Act requires that any potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) would also trigger a consultation with NMFS.

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)

A PEIS would include, among other matters:

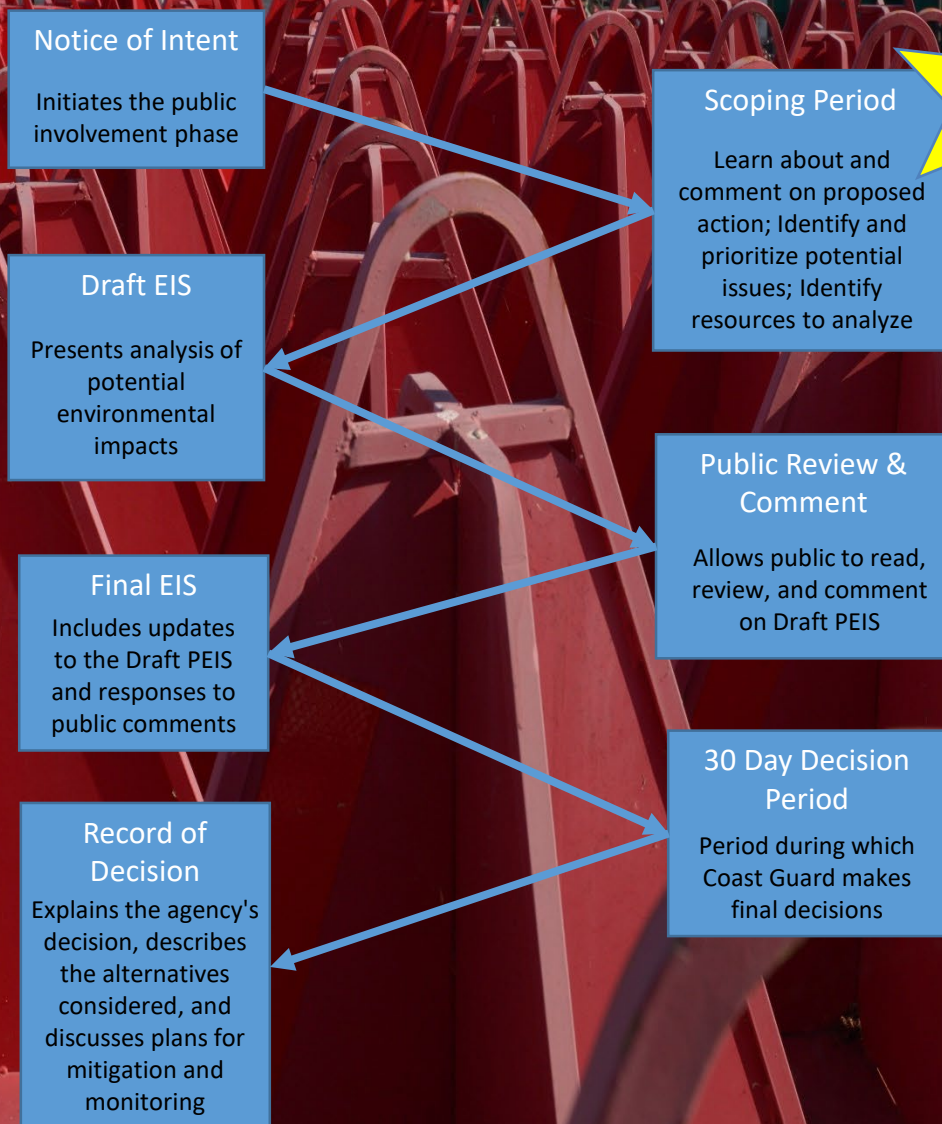
- Discussion of purpose and need for the proposed action (i.e., new WCCs)
- A description of alternatives
 - As part of the process, alternatives are considered in the analysis (including the No Action Alternative of no new WCCs)
- A description of the affected environment
- A evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives
 - The No Action Alternative is analyzed as a baseline for comparing impacts of the proposed project (e.g., not approving the design and build of new WCCs)

The Coast Guard has chosen to conduct a PEIS under NEPA to determine whether the proposed WCC activities would result in significant impact or harm to the environment. The EIS will help identify ways improve the protection and conservation of marine resources while these activities are underway.

Regulatory Process & Timeline



USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Proposed Action Alternatives



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Preliminary Proposed Action (Alternative 1)

The Coast Guard would acquire and operate up to 30 WCCs with planned design lives of 30 years each to fulfill mission requirements in the proposed action areas.

Reduced Acquisition of Coast Guard Owned and Operated Systems (Alternative 2)

The Coast Guard would explore the acquisition of fewer Coast Guard Owned and Operated WCCs and perform the ATON mission with contractor personnel.

Mixed Fleet (Alternative 3)

The mixed fleet solution would be a combination of cutters and shore-based assets (including Aids to Navigation team units), electronic ATON, and contracted ATON services.

No Action Alternative

The evaluation of a No Action Alternative is required by the regulations implementing NEPA. Under the No Action Alternative, the Coast Guard would fulfill its missions using the aging cutter and barge fleet with one for one replacements as assets become unserviceable.

This Virtual Meeting will focus on the Preliminary Proposed Action (Alternative 1)

There will be more opportunities to comment on the alternatives during the public review and comment period for the Draft PEIS.

Proposed Action: Overview



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Primary Mission: Aids to Navigation (ATON)

Establish, operate, and maintain lighted and unlighted buoys and beacons to maintain the U.S. Visual ATON Systems.

Table 1: Current USCG Inland Waterways and Western Rivers Tenders Fleet

Mission Type	Hull Classification	Years Built	Service Life
Construction Operations	WLIC (13 total)	1944, 1962, 1976	EXCEEDED
River Buoy Operations	WLR (18 total)	1960, 1964, 1990	EXCEEDED
Inland Buoy Operations	WLI (4 total)	1945, 1954, 1963	EXCEEDED

Why should the Coast Guard build Waterways Commerce Cutters?

- Enable safe navigation of waters that support the nation's economy.
- An updated and improved fleet would allow the Coast Guard to provide timely service to ATON and offer a reliable and consistent presence throughout their operating areas.
- New ships would offer a safer and more environmentally friendly platform.
- No other Coast Guard assets can access the Inland Waterways and Western Rivers (IW&WR).

Replace existing fleet of 35 Inland Waterways Cutters and 27 barges with 30 Waterways Commerce Cutters (WCC)



Current Inland Buoy tender and associated barge.
Photo provided by USCG.

Proposed Action: Overview

USCG WCC Draft PEIS

- Acquire and operate up to 30 WCCs with design service lives of 30 years each.
- Provide continuous and improved fulfillment of the IW&WR ATON mission.
- Maintain **28,200 ATON** across approximately **12,000 miles** of navigable channels.



Crew members retrieving a floating ATON and preparing to deploy a new sinker and ATON.
Photo provided by USCG.



Crew members prepare a sinker for deployment.
Photo provided by USCG.



The crane of a WCC Construction Tender being used to remove a damaged fixed ATON.
Photo provided by USCG.

Proposed Action: Overview

USCG WCC Draft PEIS

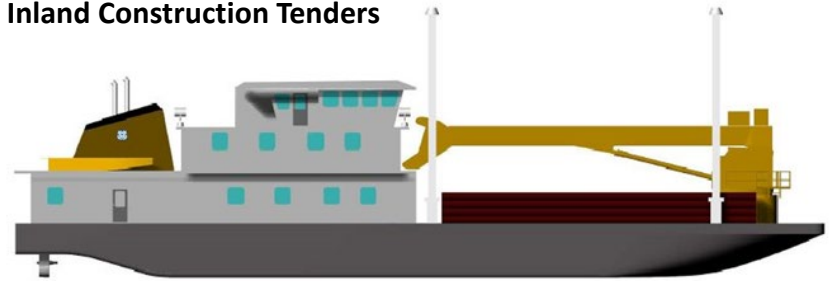
Table 2: Proposed USCG Waterways Commerce Cutters

Class	Fleet Size	Description of Operations
Construction (WCC WLIC)	Up to 11	Specifically designed to support pile driving operations, such as establishing and servicing fixed ATON structures.
River Buoy Tending (WCC WLR)	Up to 16	Establish, maintain, and discontinue floating ATON and fixed ATON structures.
Inland Buoy Tending (WCC WLI)	Up to 3	Service ATON in inland waters and waters close to shore.

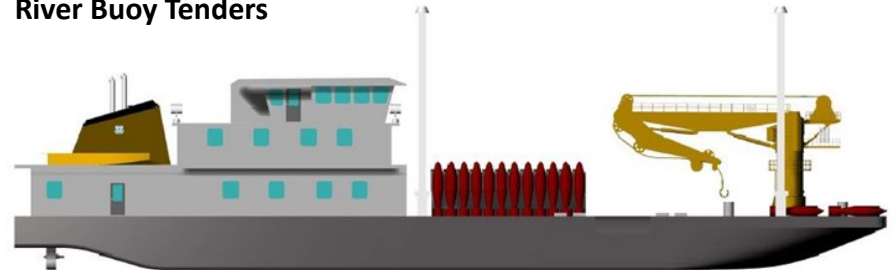
Additional Mission Support

- Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security
- Search and Rescue
- Marine Environmental Protection
- Marine Safety

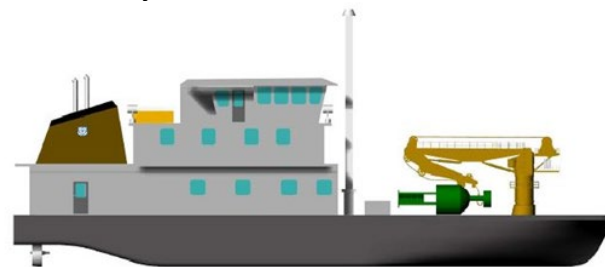
Inland Construction Tenders



River Buoy Tenders



Inland Buoy Tenders



Proposed Action: WCC Inland Construction Tenders

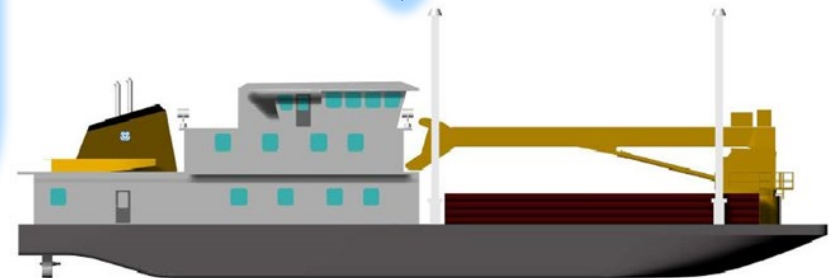
USCG WCC Draft PEIS



WCC Inland Construction Tenders

- Would serve U.S. East Coast (USEC) Mid-Atlantic, USEC-South, and Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River proposed action areas.
- Would service inland and nearshore ATON.
- Specifically designed for establishing and replacing fixed ATON.
- Designed to support impact and vibratory pile driving capabilities.

Current WLIC SAGINAW



WCC Inland Construction Tender

Proposed Action: WCC River Buoy Tenders

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard

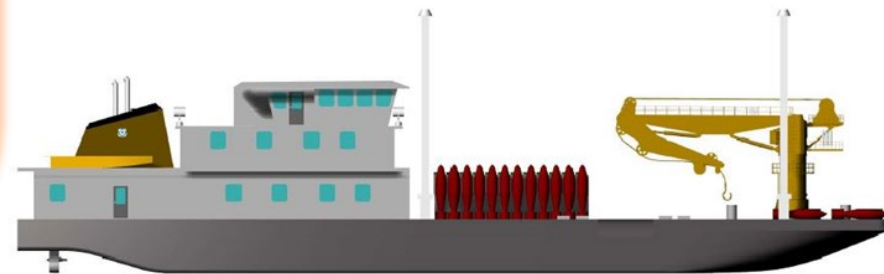
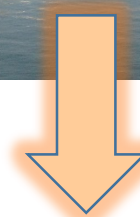


USCG WCC Draft PEIS

WCC River Buoy Tenders

- Would serve the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River proposed action area.
- Would service 12,000 – 15,000 ATON in pooled waters and open flowing rivers.
- Capable of deploying, retrieving, and relocating floating ATON and their associated equipment.

Current WLR GREENBRIER and Barge



WCC River Buoy Tender

Proposed Action: WCC Inland Buoy Tenders

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

WCC Inland Buoy Tenders

- Would serve the Pacific Northwest, Great Lakes, and Southeast Alaska proposed action areas.
- Specifically designed to service inland waters and waters close to shore.
- Capable of deploying, retrieving, and relocating floating ATON and their associated equipment.

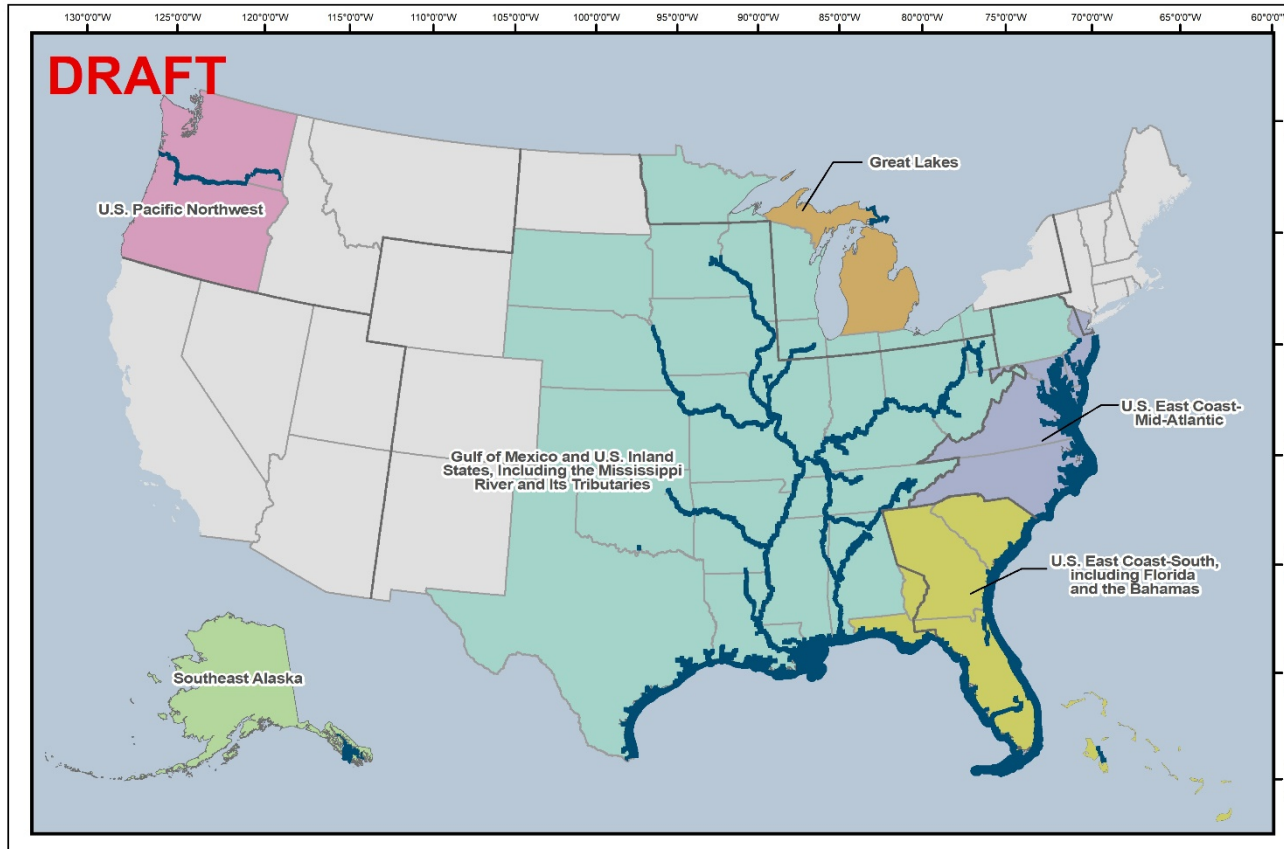





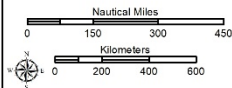


WCC Inland Buoy Tenders

Photos provided by USCG.

Proposed Action Areas

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



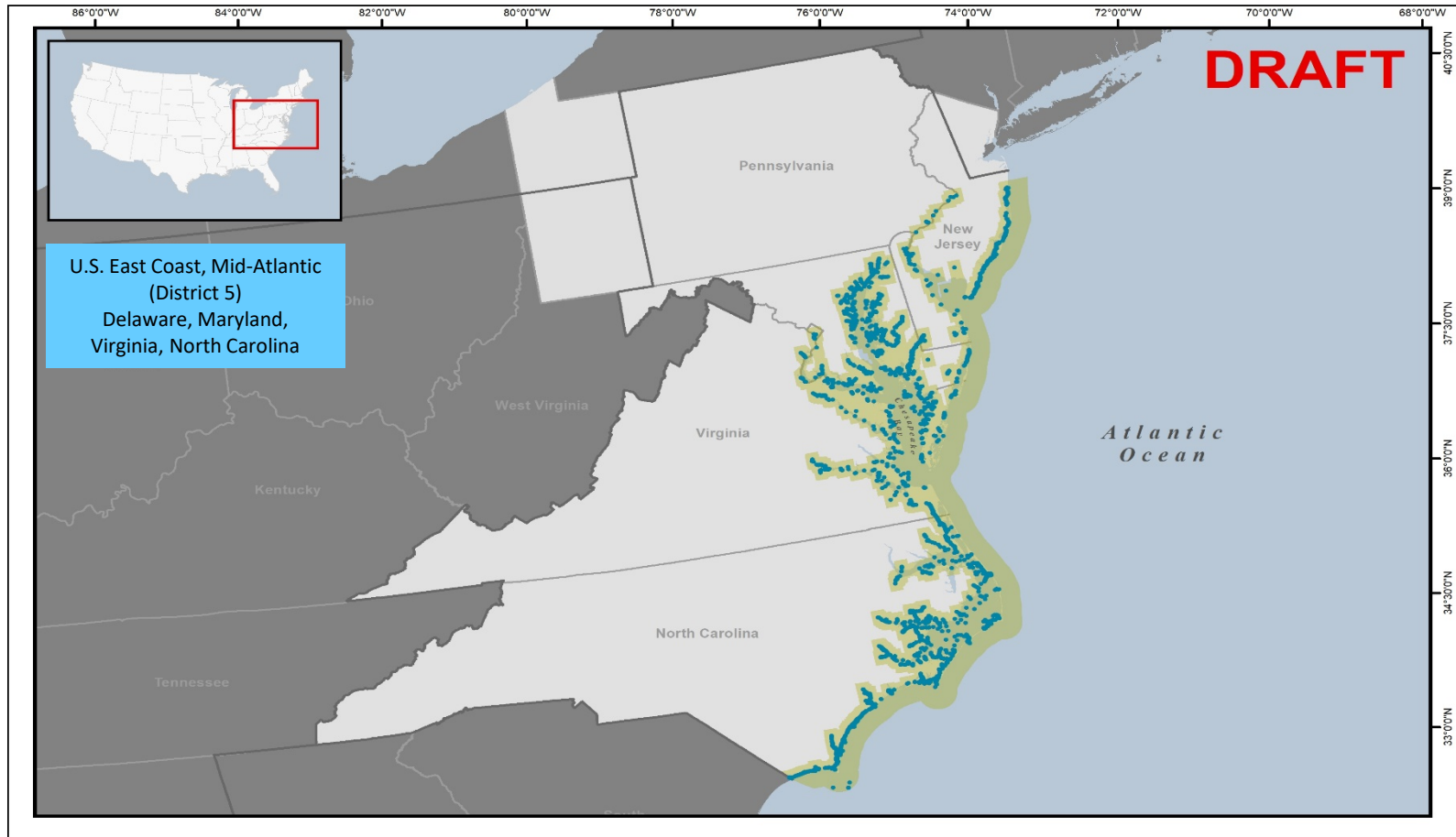
PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE:	SCALE:	SOURCE:
USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS Inland Fleet Overview WCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary  WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm)  Proposed Action Areas 	April 2, 2021	1: 20,000,000	USCG, ESRI
				 

- Transit would occur one time between the location of ship construction and its homeport.
- Transit would occur within the IW&WR, with each WCC assigned to its own operational area.
- No anticipated significant changes between the current inland tender fleet's and future WCC's operational areas.

Proposed Action Areas



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

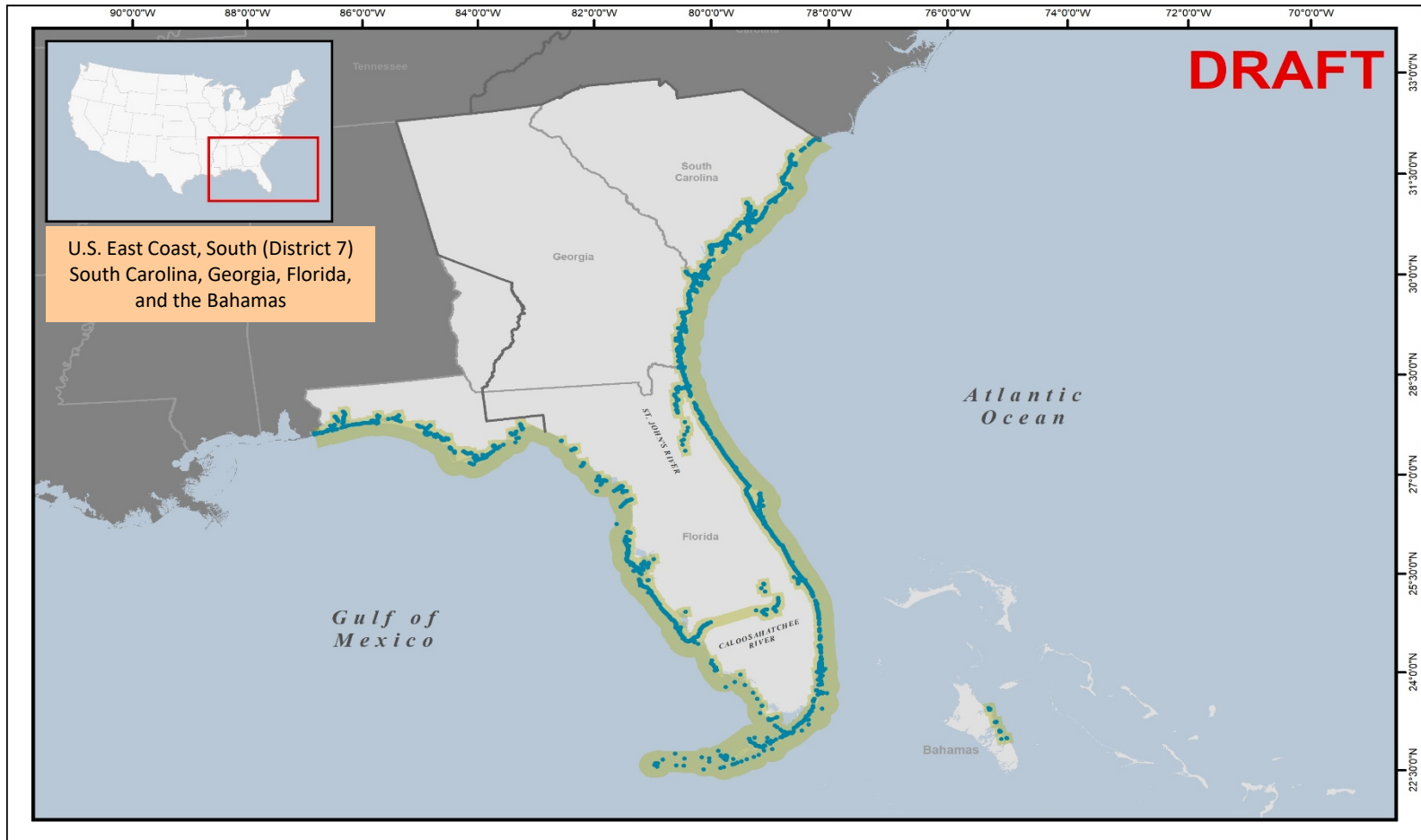


PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 2, 2021	SCALE: 1: 6,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>U.S. East Coast - Mid-Atlantic Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) 	<p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>		

Proposed Action Areas



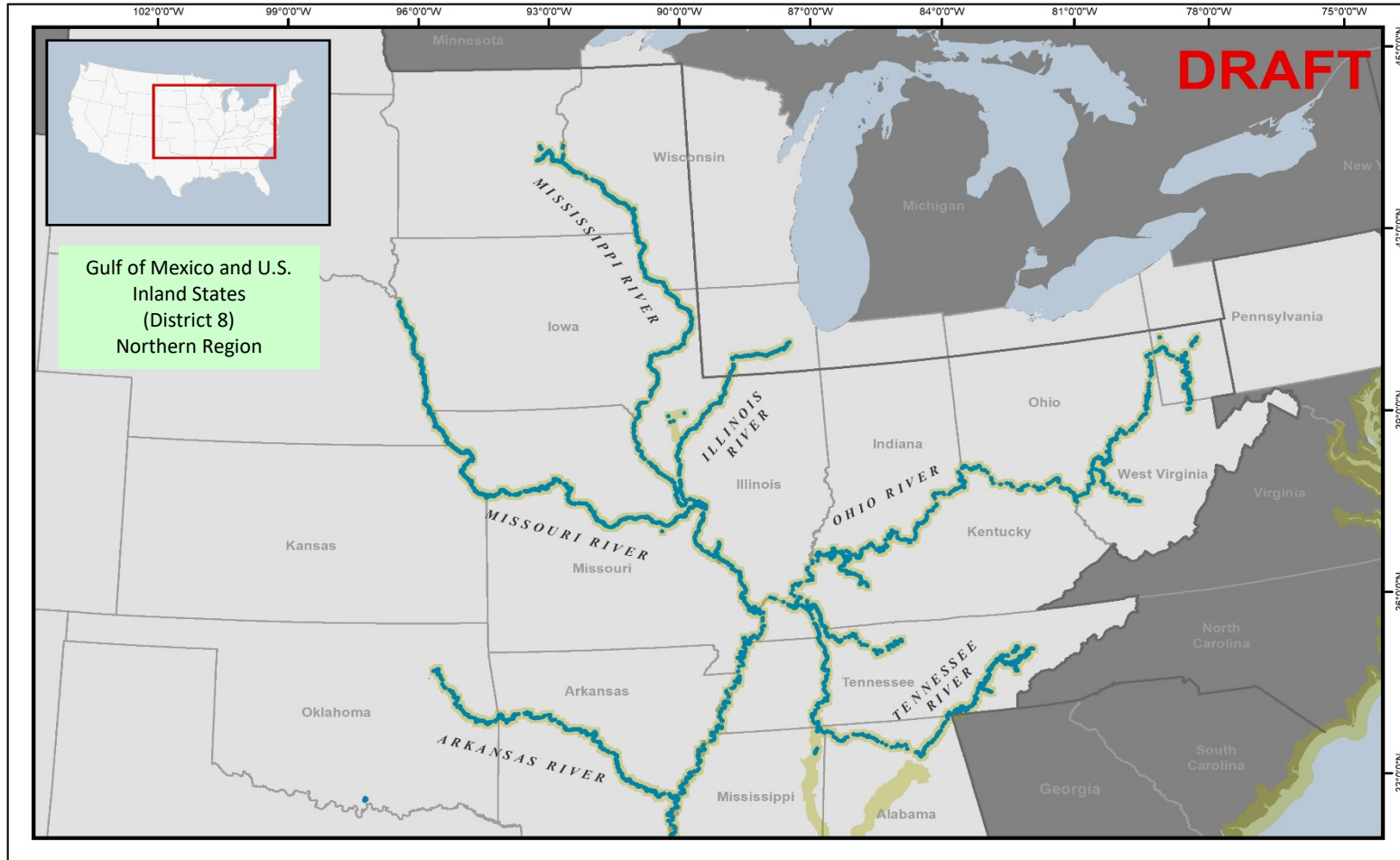
USCG WCC Draft PEIS

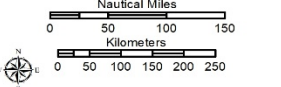



PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 6, 2021	SCALE: 1:8,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>U.S. East Coast-South, including Florida & the Bahamas Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) 	<p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>		

Proposed Action Areas

USCG WCC Draft PEIS

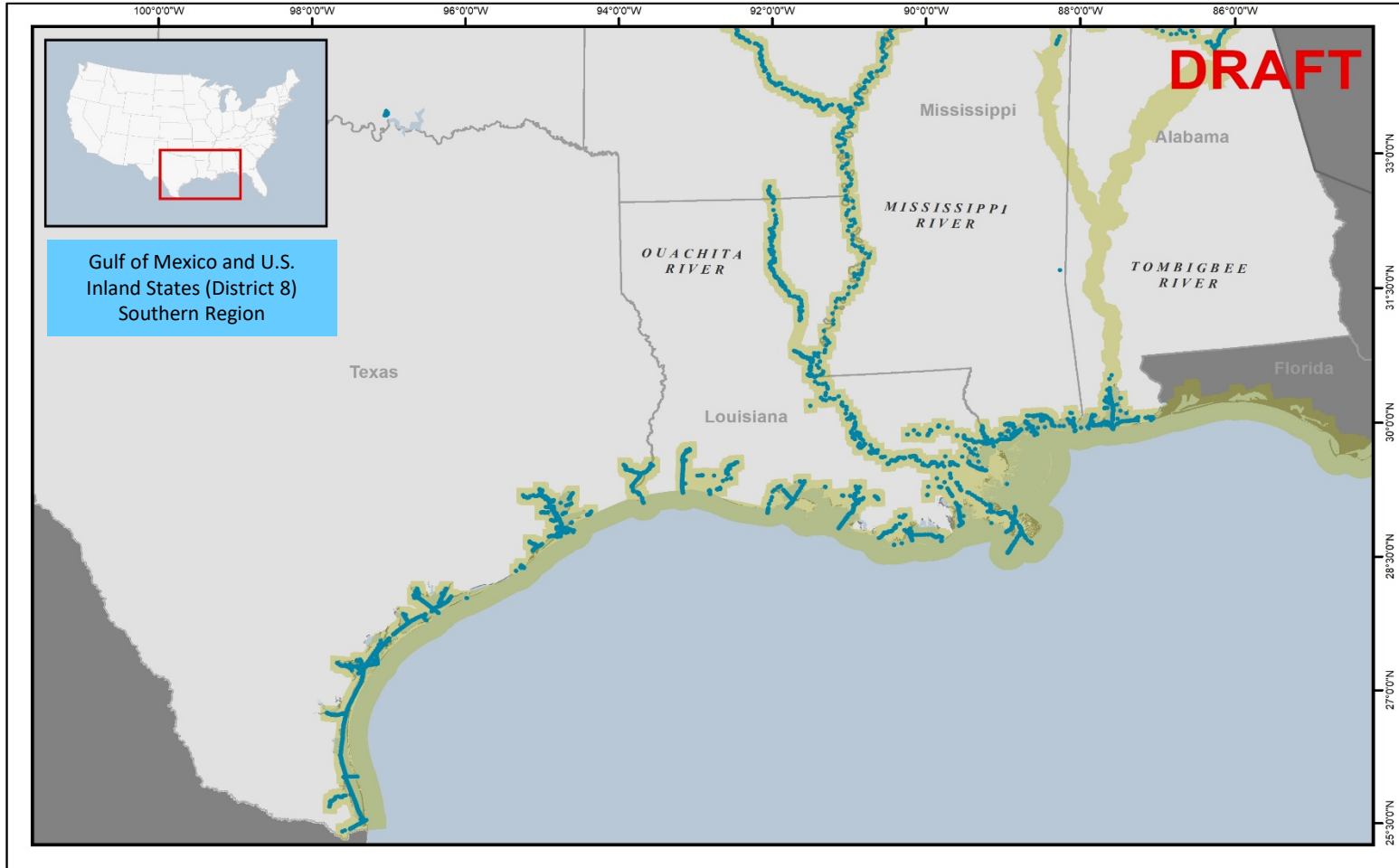


PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 5, 2021	SCALE: 1: 8,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>Gulf of Mexico and U.S. Inland States, Including the Mississippi River and Its Tributaries Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) <p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>	<p>Nautical Miles</p> <p>0 50 100 150</p> <p>Kilometers</p> <p>0 50 100 150 200 250</p> 		

Proposed Action Areas



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

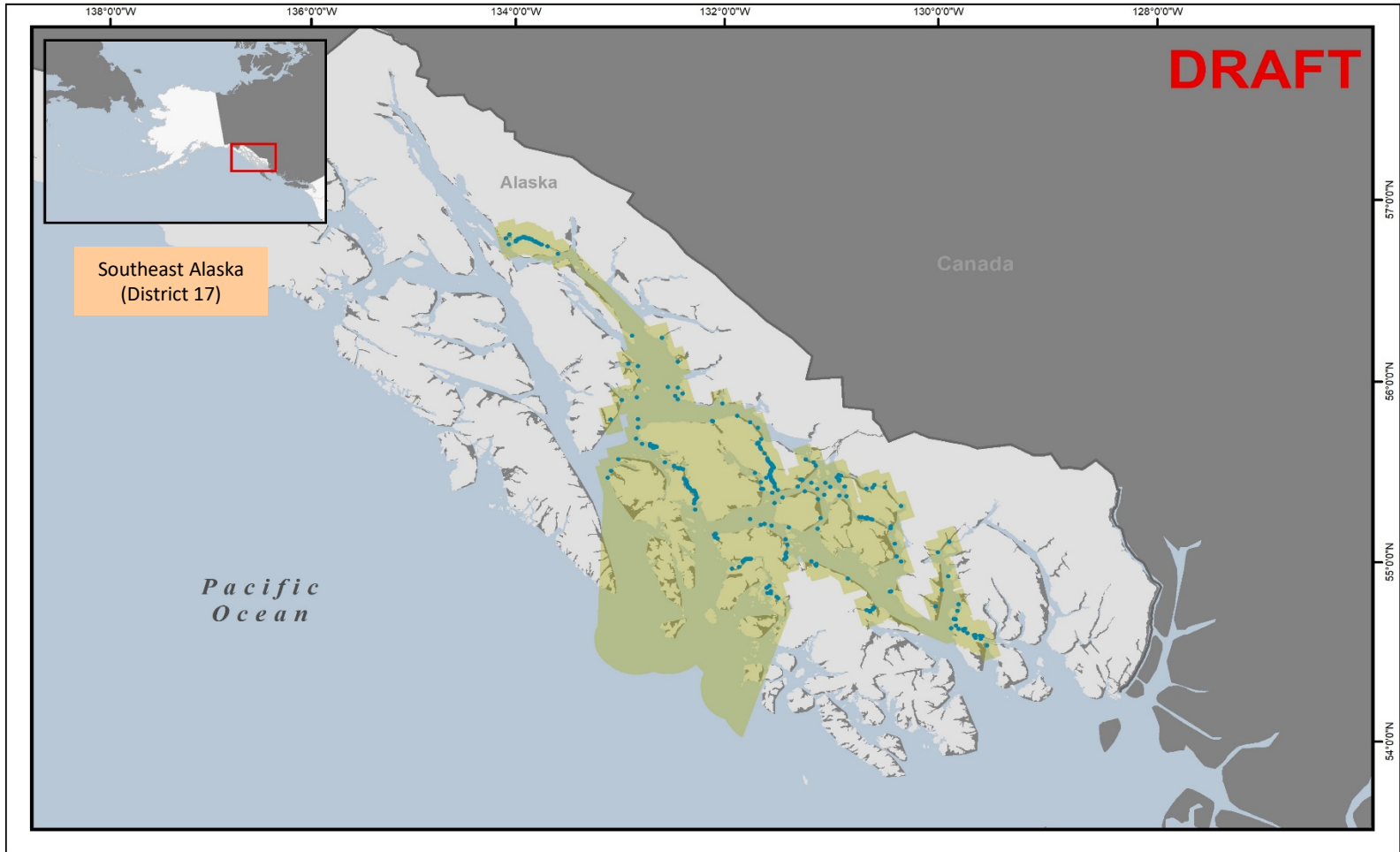


PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 5, 2021	SCALE: 1: 8,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>Gulf of Mexico and U.S. Inland States, Including the Mississippi River and Its Tributaries Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) 	<p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>	<p>Nautical Miles</p> <p>0 25 50 75 100</p> <p>Kilometers</p> <p>0 50 100 150</p>	

Proposed Action Areas



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

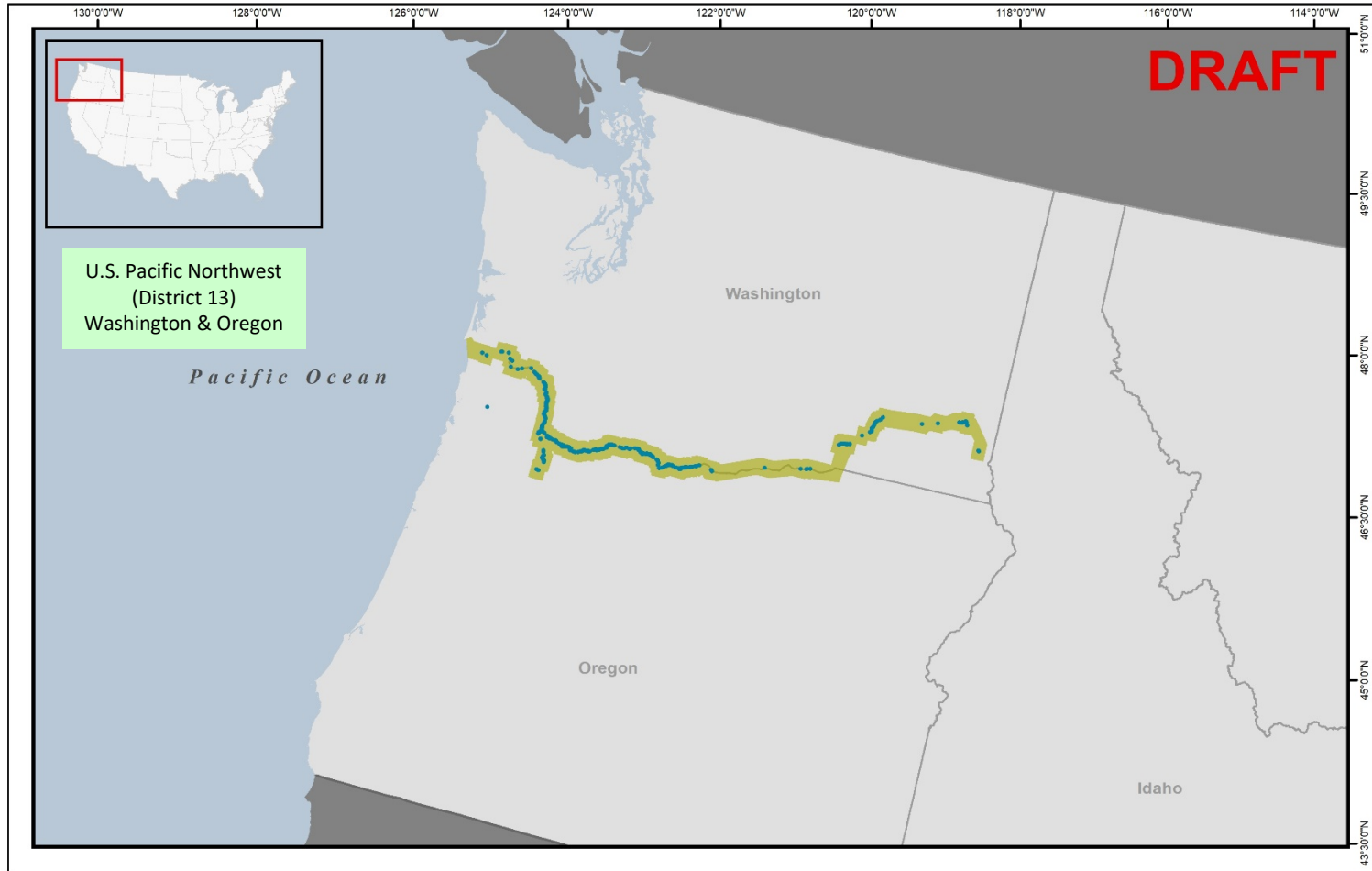


PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 02, 2021	SCALE: 1:3,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>Southeast Alaska Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) <p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>	<p>Miles</p> <p>Kilometers</p>		

Proposed Action Areas



USCG WCC Draft PEIS



PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 2, 2021	SCALE: 1:5,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>U.S. Pacific Northwest Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area 	<p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>		

Proposed Action Areas



USCG WCC Draft PEIS



PROJECT:	LEGEND:	DATE: April 02, 2021	SCALE: 1:4,000,000	SOURCE: USCG, ESRI
<p>USCG Waterways Commerce Cutter PEIS</p> <p>Great Lakes Proposed Action Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ATON U.S. Coast Guard District Boundary WCC Proposed Action Area (out to 12 nm) 	<p>NOTE: Only data within the current WCC Proposed Action Area are displayed</p>	<p>Miles</p> <p>0 25 50 75</p> <p>Kilometers</p> <p>0 25 50 75 100</p>	

Proposed Action: Stressors

USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Acoustic Stressors

- Depth-sounder/navigational system
- Vessel noise
- ATON signal noise
- Tool noise
- Pile driving noise

Physical Stressors

- Vessel movement
- Bottom disturbance
- Ground disturbance (removal of brush/construction)
- Pile driving
- Debris
- ATON retrieval devices and tow lines



Crew member using a pole saw to cut down vegetation to clear an ATON.
Photo provided by USCG.



Crew members retrieving a floating ATON and preparing to deploy a new sinker and ATON.
Photo provided by USCG.

Proposed Action: Stressors – Pile Driving

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Example of an impact pile driver. Photo provided by BAUER-Pileco Inc.

- WCC Inland Construction Tenders may be equipped with pile driving equipment to include an impact hammer, vibratory hammer, or both.
- Impact hammer pile driving is best suited for hard bottomed waterways.
- Vibratory pile driving methods are less disruptive to the environment but cannot service all bottom types.



Example of a vibratory pile driver.
Photo provided by PVE Piling & Vibro Equipment.

Pile driving activities would only occur in water depths less than 20 ft (6m) and in the following proposed action areas: USEC-MidATL, USEC-South, and GoMEX and Mississippi River.

Environmental Resources for Evaluation – Physical

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



The Coast Guard is evaluating potential impacts to a wide range of environmental resources from new WCCs and associated operations and training activities.

Resource	Description
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clean Air Act regulates all new and in-use vessels flagged in the United States that contain marine diesel engines, as well as the emissions from these engines.• WCCs are considered non-road mobile sources of emissions, which include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxide (NO_x), particulate matter, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
Ambient Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biotic, abiotic, and anthropogenic (manmade) sounds make up the existing ambient sound environment.• Each of the proposed action areas includes different combinations of sources that create the in-air and in-water ambient sound environments.
Bottom Habitat and Sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sediments consist of solid fragments of organic and inorganic matter forming the bottom of bodies of water, often referred to as substrate.• The substrate can provide suitable habitat for a wide range of species.
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clean Water Act requires the EPA to develop criteria for surface water quality that reflects the best information on the impacts of pollutants on human health and the environment.• Criteria exist for aquatic life, human health, and recreation.



Crew members assist the attachment of the impact pile driver to a pile.

Photo provided by USCG.

Potential Environmental Impacts - Physical

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Preliminary Analysis	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Emissions</u>: WCC operations could add to existing pollutant concentrations.○ WCC emissions would be unlikely to measurably add to existing pollutant concentrations because of the small number of vessels and large operation areas.○ There would be no increase in emissions over the use of the current fleet.	No Significant Impact
Ambient Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Operational Noise</u>: WCCs could impact ambient sound levels through the operation of WCC vessels, including engines, onboard equipment, and navigational technologies.○ WCC operational noise would be similar to the noise from other vessels in the proposed action areas.• <u>Pile driving noise</u> would increase the sound level in air and underwater.○ Any resulting increase to ambient sound would be short and only for the duration of active pile driving.○ There would be no increase in ambient noise over the use of the current fleet.	No Significant Impact

Potential Environmental Impacts - Physical

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Preliminary Analysis	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Bottom Habitat and Sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>ATON operations</u> may impact exposed substrate and temporarily suspend sediments.○ Sediments would be expected to shift back as they normally would following a natural disturbance.○ There would be no increase in disturbance to bottom habitat and sediment over the use of the current fleet.	No Significant Impact
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>ATON operations</u> may cause a temporary increase in turbidity in the footprint of and around ATON.○ Sediments would be expected to shift back and settle out of the water column.○ There would be no decrease in water quality (due to increased turbidity) over the operations of the current fleet.	No Significant Impact

Environmental Resources for Evaluation – Biological



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

The Coast Guard is evaluating potential impacts to a wide range of environmental resources from new WCCs and associated operations and training activities.

Resource	Description
Riverine and Marine Vegetation	Includes algae, phytoplankton, seagrass, cordgrass, and riparian vegetation. May float in the water column, attach to the seafloor, or grow along the banks of rivers, streams, and estuaries.
Invertebrates	Includes single-celled organisms, benthic worms, sponges, cnidarians (including hydroids and jellyfish), moss animals (bryozoans), cephalopods, bivalves, sea snails, chitons, amphipods, copepods, crustaceans, and echinoderms (urchins and sea cucumbers).
Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)	Includes a diverse range of species living everywhere from intertidal beaches to the bottom of the sea. EFH for federally-managed species includes all locations where fish spawn, breed, feed, or grow to maturity.
Birds	Includes species that are distributed mainly on land, but forage in aquatic habitats and those that are distributed in aquatic habitats where they also forage.
Reptiles	Includes species of turtles (including ESA-listed sea turtles), alligators, crocodiles, lizards, snakes, and worm lizards.
Marine Mammals	Includes whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals, sea lions, walruses, sea otters, and polar bears.
Terrestrial Mammals	Includes species of opossum, armadillo, rodents, rabbits, moles and shrews, bats, carnivores, and hoofed animals.
Amphibians	Includes frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders.
Insects	Includes species of beetles, flies and mosquitos, mayflies, true bugs, butterflies and moths, dobsonflies and alderflies, dragonflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies.

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Preliminary Analysis	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Riverine and Marine Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Disturbance/Removal</u>: Vegetation may be disturbed, crushed, removed, cut down, or sprayed with herbicides during WCC operations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vegetation has the potential to regrow. ○ Would only impact a small percentage of the overall vegetative population. 	No Significant Impact
Invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Noise</u> from WCC activities might mask communication and cues for larval orientation and settlement for crustaceans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Masking as a result of vessel noise would be expected to be temporary and any invertebrates that were disturbed are expected to return to the area as the WCC moves from the area. No permanent impacts to hearing capabilities are expected. • <u>Collision</u>: Some invertebrates in upper water layers might be struck by the vessel or entangled in in-water devices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vessel presence would be temporary in a given area and time and would affect an extremely small number of organisms. ○ Entanglement risk is low as there would be little to no slack in the lines and would affect an extremely small number of organisms. 	No Significant Impact

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Preliminary Analysis	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Noise</u> from WCC activities may cause some “hearing specialists” (e.g., cod and shad) and other fish species to be startled and to leave the immediate activity area, or avoid the area. EFH may be impacted due to the increase in ambient sound level.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Any reaction to noise is expected to be temporary; animals would be expected to resume normal behaviors immediately after WCC activities end.○ The quality of the water column environment as EFH would be restored to normal levels immediately following the conclusion of WCC activities.• <u>Collision</u>: Fish could be struck by the vessel or in-water devices.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Vessel presence would be temporary in a given area and time.○ Most fish would avoid the vessel or in-water devices.	No Significant Impact

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Description	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vessel noise</u> is low frequency and located at the edge of most birds' hearing range. ○ Vessel presence would be temporary in a given area, so any effects of vessel noise would be limited to temporary behavioral responses (no impacts to hearing capabilities). • <u>Disturbance</u>: The most likely response to any disturbance is to flush from the area. ○ Birds would be expected to immediately return to their normal behavior once WCC activities end. 	<p>No Significant Impact</p>
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Collision</u>: A WCC or in-water device may collide with a sea turtle. ○ The widespread, scattered distribution of turtles at sea means collisions with WCCs during open ocean transits are unlikely. Sea turtles are also rare in river environments; therefore, collisions between WCCs and sea turtles in rivers are also unlikely. • <u>Noise</u>: A sea turtle may experience a temporary hearing impact and behavioral responses from WCC activities, specifically if exposed to pile driving noise. ○ A 1,000-meter safety zone would be established around each pile with an Environmental Observer present. ○ If any sea turtles are observed within the safety zones, Coast Guard would follow pile driving safety and best management practices to minimize impacts. 	<p>No Significant Impact</p>

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Description	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Marine Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Noise</u>: The low-frequency noise produced by the ship’s engine is outside the typical hearing range of seals and toothed whales (e.g., dolphins, sperm whales); however, some other marine mammals (e.g., killer whales) may be able to hear it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a marine mammal were to hear noise associated with the Proposed Action, the marine mammal’s reaction is expected to be temporary. • <u>Pile driving noise</u>: A marine mammal may experience a temporary hearing impact and behavioral responses from WCC activities, specifically if exposed to pile driving noise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The limited duration of Coast Guard pile driving events reduces the potential for marine mammals to be exposed. ○ Coast Guard pile driving would not result in prolonged periods of elevated underwater sound since each pile driving only lasts, at most, a few hours. ○ A 1,000-meter safety zone would be established around each pile with an Environmental Observer present. ○ If any marine mammals are observed within the safety zones, Coast Guard would follow pile driving safety and best management practices to minimize impacts. 	<p>No Significant Impact</p>

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Description	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Marine Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Collision</u>: Marine mammals could be struck by the WCC or in-water devices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The probability of a vessel encountering a marine mammal is expected to be low. ○ Mitigation measures would be initiated upon the sighting of a marine mammal. 	No Significant Impact
Terrestrial Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vessel noise</u>: The low-frequency noise produced by the ship's engine may be within the hearing range of some terrestrial mammals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any behavioral responses to vessel noise are expected to be temporary and any terrestrial mammals that are disturbed are expected to return to the area as the WCC moves from the area. No permanent impacts to hearing capabilities are expected. • <u>Pile driving noise</u> may disturb terrestrial mammals during operations, potentially interrupting the daytime sleep of nocturnal species or interfering with foraging in favored locations for diurnal species. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is expected that terrestrial mammals would return to their normal behavior shortly after exposure. 	No Significant Impact

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Description	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Terrestrial Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Disturbance</u>: The most likely response to any disturbance is to flush from the area.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ WCC activities would be temporary and terrestrial mammals would be expected to immediately return to their normal behavior once WCC activities end.	No Significant Impact
Amphibians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Vessel noise</u>: Potential impacts to amphibians from vessel noise would most likely result in masking or cause a behavioral response.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Any behavioral responses to vessel noise are expected to be temporary and any amphibians that are disturbed are expected to return to the area as the WCC moves from the area. No permanent impacts to hearing capabilities are expected.• <u>Collision</u>: The potential for minor injury, permanent injury, or death from bleeding/trauma, paralysis and subsequent drowning, infection, or inability to feed exists if an amphibian is struck by a WCC.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In the event of a strike, individuals may be impacted, but population-level effects would not be expected.	No Significant Impact

Potential Environmental Impacts - Biological

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following resources:

Resource	Description	Anticipated Significance of Impact
Amphibians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Disturbance</u>: The most likely response to any disturbance is to flush from the area.○ WCC activities would be temporary and amphibians would be expected to immediately return to their normal behavior once WCC activities end.	No Significant Impact
Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Habitat Loss</u>: In clearing vegetation and sediment away, a small percentage of habitat may be lost.• <u>Removal of Vegetation</u>: Insects may also experience injury or mortality due to the use of chainsaws, pole saws, hand tools, and pesticides and herbicides to clear away vegetation.○ Short term behavioral reactions are not expected to result in long-term impacts to individuals (such as chronic stress) or populations given the diffuse land-based ATON spread throughout the proposed action areas.	No Significant Impact

Socioeconomic Resources for Evaluation



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

To determine potential impacts from the addition of new WCCs and associated operations, the Coast Guard is evaluating a wide range of socioeconomic resources.

Resource	Description
Commercial Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Commercial fishing takes place throughout much of the proposed action areas, including coastal waters within 12 nm of the shore.Commercial fishing in inland freshwater is rare, but not completely absent.
Marine Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">May include nearshore projects, such as the construction of marinas, port improvements, and beach renourishment.Offshore marine construction projects may include the construction of oil and gas platforms, pipelines, and wind turbines, amongst others.
Mineral Extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sand or gravel mining may be conducted coastally or at inland locations.
Oil and Gas Extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">States control oil and gas development within their state waters, from the coast to 3 nm for most states.Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) manages leases for oil and gas production on the outer continental shelf (OCS).Nearly all offshore oil and gas production in the U.S. EEZ occurs within the Gulf of Mexico.
Recreation and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Includes the full range of tourism, leisure, recreationally-oriented activities, and associated development (e.g., hotels, resorts, restaurants, food industry, vacation homes, second homes, retail businesses, marinas, fishing tackle stores, dive shops, fishing piers, and recreational fishing facilities).

Socioeconomic Resources for Evaluation

USCG WCC Draft PEIS



To determine potential impacts from the addition of new WCCs and associated operations, the Coast Guard is evaluating a wide range of socioeconomic resources.

Resource	Description
Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewable energy resources that would be located in the proposed action areas could be categorized as riverine (hydroelectric, pump storage) and marine (emerging in-water technologies, offshore wind).
Transportation and Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Container ships bringing components and finished products to markets; tankers and dry bulk vessels bringing ore, oil, gas, and more to and from their points of production; fishing vessels; passenger and tourism vessels; and research vessels.
Subsistence Fishing and Hunting and Cultural Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes customary and traditional uses of wild resources for food, clothing, fuel, transportation, construction, arts, and crafts.

Potential Socioeconomic Impacts



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Based on preliminary analyses using the best available science the Coast Guard has evaluated the following socioeconomic resources:

Resource	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Proposed Mitigation or Coordination
Commercial Fisheries	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including commercial fishermen, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions. In addition, USCG missions protect fisheries.	Indirect impacts to fish from stressors associated with WCC operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Marine Construction	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including construction workers, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	No negative impacts anticipated. USCG would not cease or disrupt marine construction to conduct operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Mineral Extraction	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including workers on vessels, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	No negative impacts anticipated. USCG would not cease or disrupt mineral extraction to conduct operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Oil and Gas Extraction	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including workers on vessels or oil and gas platforms, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	No negative impacts anticipated. USCG would not cease or disrupt oil and gas extraction to conduct operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Recreation and Tourism	USCG presence would ensure that boaters, including fishermen and workers on vessels, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	Indirect impacts to fish and marine mammals that may impact recreational fishing and whale watching.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.

Potential Socioeconomic Impacts






USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Resource	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Proposed Mitigation or Coordination
Renewable Energy	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including workers on vessels or at structures, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	No negative impacts anticipated. USCG would not cease or disrupt renewable energy activities to conduct operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Transportation and Shipping	USCG presence would ensure that mariners, including those on shipping or passenger vessels, would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions.	No negative impacts anticipated. USCG would not cease or disrupt transportation or shipping to conduct operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Continued coordination expected.
Subsistence Fishing and Hunting and Cultural Use	USCG presence would ensure that subsistence fishermen and hunters on vessels would have support should an emergency arise due to ATON, marine safety, and SAR missions. In addition, USCG missions protect marine mammals and fish.	Indirect impacts to fish and marine mammals from stressors associated with WCC operations.	No mitigation needs anticipated. Coordination: USCG would continue open communication open with tribes, especially during subsistence hunting periods to avoid areas of potential overlap. USCG would share any useful information regarding biological resources encountered during these times.

Regulatory Process, Timeline, & Schedule



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

MILESTONE	DESCRIPTION	SCHEDULE
Notice of Intent to Prepare a PEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates the public involvement phase of the NEPA process 	May 2021
 Scoping Meetings and Comment Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an early and open public process for identifying, defining, and prioritizing issues to be evaluated in the EIS Includes public meetings and other opportunities to learn more about the project and submit comments 	Scoping Period: April 27 - June 11, 2021 Public Meetings: May 11 & 12, 2021
Draft PEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the analysis of potential environmental impacts for each identified alternative 	Early Summer 2021
 Draft PEIS, Public Review and Comment Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides 60 days for the public to comment on the analysis present in the Draft PEIS Includes public meetings and other opportunities to learn more about the project and submit comments 	Comment period ends: 60 days after Draft PEIS public posting
Final PEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes updates to the Draft PEIS and responses to public comments received during the Draft PEIS comment period 	Early Fall 2021
 30-Day Waiting Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides 30 days after the Final PEIS is published before the U.S. Coast Guard may take final action 	Fall 2021
Record of Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows the 30-day wait period and consideration of public comments Includes selection of an alternative by the U.S. Coast Guard 	Late Fall 2021



Opportunities for Public Review and Comment



Complete



In Progress



Upcoming

How to Submit Comments



USCG WCC Draft PEIS

Public involvement is a fundamental part of the development of the PEIS. The Coast Guard welcomes and appreciates your comments.

Your comments submitted on the NOI will become part of the public record, and may be addressed in the Draft PEIS. Similarly, your comments submitted on the Draft PEIS will become part of the public record, and addressed in the Final PEIS.

- Public input is essential to ensure the most informed decision is made.
 - Review and comment on the Draft PEIS
 - Sign up for the mailing list
 - Check the project website for updates on the PEIS and Record of Decision
- Comments can be submitted:
 - Through the Federal Decision Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>.
 - Through e-mail at HQS-SMB-CG-WaterwaysCommerceCutter@uscg.mil.

THANK YOU

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED ONLINE BY
June 11, 2021
FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE *DRAFT* PEIS

- Please remain on mute until invited to speak.
- Those that called in will be invited to ask questions by phone number.
 - When called upon, please state whether or not you have a question or comment, followed by your name and the question or comment.
- If using Microsoft Teams, NAVSEA has and is continuing to collect your questions and comments and will be reading them aloud shortly.
- Additional questions and comments may be submitted to: HQS-SMB-CG-WaterwaysCommerceCutter@uscg.mil
 - These questions will not be read aloud.
- Alternatively comments may be submitted through the Federal Decision-Making portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, using the search function for Waterways Commerce Cutter or by docket number USCG-2021-0191.

SUBMIT COMMENTS:

Federal Decision-Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>