



Acquisition
Directorate



WATERWAYS COMMERCE CUTTER

CHARACTERISTICS

Length (maximum):
180 ft. (WLR); 160 ft. (WLIC);
120 ft. (WLI)

Beam (maximum):
35 feet

**End-of-Service-Life
Full-Load Draft:**
5 feet 6 inches

**Speed (minimum,
open water):**
11 knots

Endurance (minimum):
11 days (WLR/WLIC),
7 days (WLI)

Crew (threshold):
17 (WLR/WLIC); 14 (WLI)

The Coast Guard's inland tender fleet protects vital infrastructure and facilitates the free flow of commerce along the Nation's marine highways, protecting American jobs and contributing to America's economic and energy security. These cutters allow the Coast Guard to establish, maintain and repair aids to navigation (ATON) in dynamic waters largely inaccessible by larger and geographically displaced ATON units. The inland tenders also provide some of the same capabilities as the Coast Guard's oceangoing cutter fleet, enabling them to quickly and effectively respond to emergencies such as environmental incidents and severe weather events.

However, the current inland tender fleet has an average age of more than 57 years, and due to increasing obsolescence of vessel components and systems, maintenance costs are rising. To address these concerns, the Coast Guard is taking steps to ensure continuity of its inland maritime mission capability.

The Coast Guard Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) Program is replacing the current inland tenders with 16 River Buoy Tenders (WLRs), 11 Inland Construction Tenders (WLICs), and three Inland Buoy Tenders (WLIs). The new ships will have greater endurance, speed, and deck load capacity than their predecessors. The WCCs will also feature improved habitability.

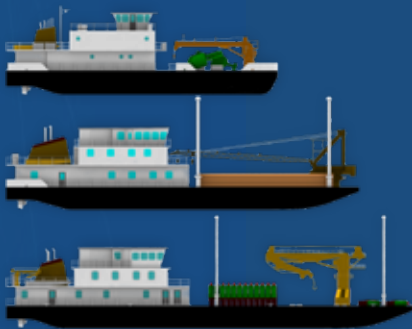
The WLR and WLIC variants will be acquired on one contract. These variants will maximize commonality with notable exceptions for hull length, working deck layout, and deck equipment, including the crane. The Coast Guard awarded a contract for WLR/WLIC detail design and construction to Birdon America, Inc. of Denver on October 5, 2022. The initial award was worth \$28.49 million. If all contract line items are exercised, the total contract value is estimated as \$1.19 billion.

The WLIs will be acquired separately from the other two variants. In June 2021, the WCC Program began partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Marine Design Center, which has experience with similar acquisitions, to develop a Government-led design for the Inland Buoy Tender variant. The WLIs will be contractor-built.

FEATURES

- **WLR:** Capability to place in the water and lift out of the water (while underway); self-load from a pier; and secure on the working deck a buoy up to the size and weight of a Coast Guard 4NR buoy, with its associated mooring and navigation signal equipment
- **WLIC:** Capability to self-load from a pier, place in the water, lift out of the water and secure on the working deck a 60-foot pile and its associated navigation signal equipment, while spudded down
- **WLI:** Capability to place in the water, lift out of the water, self-load from a pier, and secure on the working deck a buoy, up to the size and weight of a Coast Guard 1992 type 6x20 LR buoy, with its associated mooring and navigation signal equipment, while underway
- **Standardized small ATON cutter boat (WLR: two boats each; WLIC and WLI: one boat each)**

From top: Coast Guard notional renderings of an Inland Buoy Tender, Inland Construction Tender, and River Buoy Tender



For updates on the **Waterways Commerce Cutter**, visit the program's website at www.dcms.uscg.mil/acquisition