



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 100

[Docket Number USCG-2019-0107]

RIN 1625-AA08

Special Local Regulation; Choptank River, Cambridge, MD

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is proposing to establish special local regulations for certain waters of the Choptank River. This action is necessary to provide for the safety of life on these navigable waters located at Cambridge, MD, during a high-speed power boat racing event on July 27, 2019, and July 28, 2019. This proposed rulemaking would prohibit persons and vessels from being in the regulated area unless authorized by the Captain of the Port Maryland-National Capital Region or Coast Guard Patrol Commander. We invite your comments on this proposed rulemaking.

DATES: Comments and related material must be received by the Coast Guard on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2019-0107 using the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. See the “Public Participation and Request for Comments” portion of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section for further instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions about this proposed rulemaking, call or email Mr. Ron Houck, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region; telephone 410-576-2674, e-mail Ronald.L.Houck@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COTP	Captain of the Port
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	Federal Register
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
PATCOM	Coast Guard Patrol Commander
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background, Purpose, and Legal Basis

On February 10, 2019, the Kent Narrows Racing Association of Chester, MD, notified the Coast Guard that it will be conducting the Thunder on the Choptank from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on July 27, 2019, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on July 28, 2019. The high-speed power boat racing event consists of approximately 60 participating inboard and outboard hydroplane and runabout race boats of various classes, 10 to 20 feet in length. The vessels will be competing on a designated, marked 1-mile oval course located in the Choptank River in a cove located between Hambrooks Bar and the shoreline at Cambridge, MD. Hazards from the power boat racing event include risks of injury or death resulting from near or actual contact among participant vessels and spectator vessels or waterway users if normal vessel traffic were to interfere with the event. Additionally, such hazards include participants operating near designated navigation channels, as well as operating near approaches to local public boat ramps, private marinas and yacht clubs, and waterfront businesses. The COTP Maryland-

National Capital Region has determined that potential hazards associated with the power boat races would be a safety concern for anyone intending to operate within certain waters of the Choptank River at Cambridge, MD.

The purpose of this rulemaking is to protect event participants, spectators, and transiting vessels on certain waters of Choptank River before, during, and after the scheduled event. The Coast Guard proposes this rulemaking under authority in 46 U.S.C. 70041, which authorizes the Coast Guard to establish and define special local regulations.

III. Discussion of Proposed Rule

The COTP Maryland-National Capital Region is proposing to establish special local regulations to be enforced from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on July 27, 2019, and from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 on July 28, 2019. The regulated area would cover all navigable waters within Hambrooks Bay and Choptank River west and south of a line commencing at the shoreline, at latitude 38°35'00" N. longitude 076°04'43" W., thence east to latitude 38°35'00" N. longitude 076°04'23.7" W., thence north to latitude 38°35'22.7" N., longitude 076°04'23.7" W., thence northwest to latitude 38°35'42.2" N., longitude 076°04'51.1" W. at Hambrooks Bar Light LLNR 24995, thence southwest to latitude 38°35'34.2" N., longitude 076°05'12.3" W., terminating at the Hambrooks Bay breakwall as it intersects the shoreline.

This proposed rule provides additional information about areas within the regulated area, and the restrictions that apply to mariners. These areas include a "Race Area", "Buffer Zone" and "Spectator Area".

The proposed duration of the rule and size of the regulated area are intended to ensure the safety of life on these navigable waters before, during, and after the high-speed

power boat races, scheduled from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on July 27, 2019, and July 28, 2019. The COTP and Coast Guard Patrol Commander (PATCOM) would have authority to forbid and control the movement of all vessels and persons, including event participants, in the regulated area. When hailed or signaled by an official patrol, a vessel or person in the regulated area would be required to immediately comply with the directions given by the COTP or PATCOM. If a person or vessel fails to follow such directions, the Coast Guard may expel them from the area, issue them a citation for failure to comply, or both.

Except for Thunder on the Choptank participants and vessels already at berth, a vessel or person would be required to get permission from the COTP or PATCOM before entering the regulated area while the rule is being enforced. Vessel operators could request permission to enter and transit through the regulated area by contacting the PATCOM on VHF-FM channel 16. Vessel traffic would be able to safely transit the regulated area once the PATCOM deems it safe to do so. A person or vessel not registered with the event sponsor as a participant or assigned as official patrols would be considered a spectator. Official Patrols are any vessel assigned or approved by the Commander, Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region with a commissioned, warrant, or petty officer on board and displaying a Coast Guard ensign.

If permission is granted by the COTP or PATCOM, a person or vessel would be allowed to enter the regulated area or pass directly through the regulated area as instructed. Vessels would be required to operate at a safe speed that minimizes wake while within the regulated area. Official patrol vessels will direct spectator vessels while within the regulated area. Vessels would be prohibited from loitering within the

navigable channel. Only participant vessels and official patrol vessels would be allowed to enter the race area.

The regulatory text we are proposing appears at the end of this document.

IV. Regulatory Analyses

We developed this proposed rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on a number of these statutes and Executive orders and we discuss First Amendment rights of protestors.

A. Regulatory Planning and Review

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits. Executive Order 13771 directs agencies to control regulatory costs through a budgeting process. This NPRM has not been designated a “significant regulatory action,” under Executive Order 12866. Accordingly, the NPRM has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and pursuant to OMB guidance it is exempt from the requirements of Executive Order 13771.

This regulatory action determination is based on the size, duration and time of year of the racing event, which would impact a small designated area of the Choptank River for 18 total enforcement hours. The Coast Guard would issue a Broadcast Notice to Mariners via VHF-FM marine channel 16 about the status of the special local regulation. Moreover, the rule would allow vessels to seek permission to enter the regulated area, and vessel traffic would be able to safely transit the regulated area once the PATCOM deems it safe to do so.

B. Impact on Small Entities

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. 601–612, as amended, requires Federal agencies to consider the potential impact of regulations on small entities during rulemaking. The term “small entities” comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. The Coast Guard certifies under 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

While some owners or operators of vessels intending to transit the regulated area may be small entities, for the reasons stated in section IV.A above, this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on any vessel owner or operator.

If you think that your business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction qualifies as a small entity and that this rule would have a significant economic impact on it, please submit a comment (see ADDRESSES) explaining why you think it qualifies and how and to what degree this rule would economically affect it.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-121), we want to assist small entities in understanding this proposed rule. If the rule would affect your small business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please contact the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section. The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this proposed rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

C. Collection of Information

This proposed rule would not call for a new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520).

D. Federalism and Indian Tribal Governments

A rule has implications for federalism under Executive Order 13132, Federalism, if it has a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. We have analyzed this proposed rule under that Order and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and preemption requirements described in Executive Order 13132.

Also, this proposed rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, because it would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. If you believe this proposed rule has implications for federalism or Indian tribes, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531-1538) requires Federal agencies to assess the effects of their discretionary regulatory actions. In particular, the Act addresses actions that may result in the expenditure by a State, local, or tribal government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100,000,000 (adjusted for inflation) or more in any one year. Though this proposed rule would not result in such an expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this rule elsewhere in this preamble.

F. Environment

We have analyzed this proposed rule under Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01 and Commandant Instruction M16475.1D, which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370f), and have made a preliminary determination that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposed rule involves implementation of regulations within 33 CFR Part 100 applicable to organized marine events on the navigable waters of the United States that could negatively impact the safety of waterway users and shore side activities in the event area lasting for 33 hours. Normally such actions are categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L61 of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, Rev. 01. We seek any comments or information that may lead to the discovery of a significant environmental impact from this proposed rule.

G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to contact the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places, or vessels.

V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to

which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <http://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice>.

Documents mentioned in this NPRM as being available in the docket, and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or a final rule is published.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 100

Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard proposes to amend 33 CFR part 100 as follows:

PART 100--SAFETY OF LIFE ON NAVIGABLE WATERS

1. The authority citation for part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 46 U.S.C. 70041; 33 CFR 1.05-1.

2. Add § 100.501T05-0107 to read as follows:

§ 100.501T05-0107 Special Local Regulation; Choptank River, Cambridge, MD.

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

Captain of the Port (COTP) Maryland-National Capital Region means the Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region or any Coast Guard commissioned, warrant or petty officer who has been authorized by the COTP to act on his behalf.

Coast Guard Patrol Commander (PATCOM) means a commissioned, warrant, or petty officer of the U.S. Coast Guard who has been designated by the Commander, Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region.

Official Patrol means any vessel assigned or approved by Commander, Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region with a commissioned, warrant, or petty officer on board and displaying a Coast Guard ensign.

Participants means all persons and vessels registered with the event sponsor as participating in the Thunder on the Choptank or otherwise designated by the event sponsor as having a function tied to the event.

Spectators means all persons and vessels not registered with the event sponsor as participants or assigned as official patrols.

(b) Locations. All coordinates reference Datum NAD 1983.

(1) Regulated area. All navigable waters within Hambrooks Bay and Choptank River west and south of a line commencing at the shoreline, at latitude 38°35'00" N. longitude 076°04'43" W., thence east to latitude 38°35'00" N. longitude 076°04'23.7" W., thence north to latitude 38°35'22.7" N., longitude 076°04'23.7" W., thence northwest to

latitude 38°35'42.2" N., longitude 076°04'51.1" W. at Hambrooks Bar Light LLNR 24995, thence southwest to latitude 38°35'34.2" N., longitude 076°05'12.3" W., terminating at the Hambrooks Bay breakwall as it intersects the shoreline. The following locations are within the regulated area:

(2) Race Area. Located within the waters of Hambrooks Bay and Choptank River, between Hambrooks Bar and Great Marsh Point, MD.

(3) Buffer Zone. All waters within Hambrooks Bay and Choptank River (with the exception of the Race Area designated by the marine event sponsor) bound to the north by the breakwall and continuing along a line drawn from the east end of breakwall located at latitude 38°35'27.6" N., longitude 076°04'50.1" W., thence southeast to latitude 38°35'17.7" N. longitude 076°04'29" W., thence south to latitude 38°35'01" N. longitude 076°04'29" W., thence west to the shoreline at latitude 38°35'01" N., longitude 076°04'41.3" W.

(4) Spectator Area. All waters of the Choptank River, eastward and outside of Hambrooks Bay breakwall, thence bound by line that commences at latitude 38°35'27.6" N., longitude 076°04'50.1" W., thence southeast to latitude 38°35'21.3" N., longitude 076°04'37.2" W., thence southeast to latitude 38°35'21.3" N. longitude 076°04'37.2" W., thence northeast to latitude 38°35'27.8" N. longitude 076°04'30.5" W, thence northwest to latitude 38°35'42.2" N. longitude 076°04'51.1" W. at Hambrooks Bar Light LLNR 24995, thence south to and terminating at the point of origin.

(c) Special local regulations: (1) The COTP Maryland-National Capital Region or PATCOM may forbid and control the movement of all vessels and persons, including event participants, in the regulated area. When hailed or signaled by an official patrol, a

vessel or person in the regulated area shall immediately comply with the directions given by the patrol. Failure to do so may result in the Coast Guard expelling the person or vessel from the area, issuing a citation for failure to comply, or both. The COTP Maryland-National Capital Region or PATCOM may terminate the event, or a participant's operations at any time the COTP Maryland-National Capital Region or PATCOM believes it necessary to do so for the protection of life or property.

(2) Except for participants and vessels already at berth, a person or vessel within the regulated area at the start of enforcement of this section must immediately depart the regulated area.

(3) A spectator must contact the PATCOM to request permission to either enter or pass through the regulated area. The PATCOM, and official patrol vessels enforcing this regulated area, can be contacted on marine band radio VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz) and channel 22A (157.1 MHz). If permission is granted, the spectator may enter the designated Spectator Area or must pass directly through the regulated area as instructed by PATCOM. A vessel within the regulated area must operate at safe speed that minimizes wake. A spectator vessel must not loiter within the navigable channel while within the regulated area.

(4) A person or vessel that desires to transit, moor, or anchor within the regulated area must first obtain authorization from the COTP Maryland-National Capital Region or PATCOM. A person or vessel seeking such permission can contact the COTP Maryland-National Capital Region at telephone number 410-576-2693 or on Marine Band Radio, VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz) or the PATCOM on Marine Band Radio, VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz).

(5) The Coast Guard will publish a notice in the Fifth Coast Guard District Local Notice to Mariners and issue a marine information broadcast on VHF-FM marine band radio announcing specific event date and times.

(d) Enforcement officials. The Coast Guard may be assisted with marine event patrol and enforcement of the regulated area by other Federal, State, and local agencies.

(e) Enforcement periods. This section will be enforced from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on July 27, 2019, and, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on July 28, 2019.

Dated: March 12, 2019.

Joseph B. Loring,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,
Captain of the Port Maryland-National Capital Region.
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