

the Department of Transportation (DOT)(44 FR 11040; February 26, 1979).

The Coast Guard expects the economic impact of this rule to be so minimal that a full Regulatory Evaluation under paragraph 10e of the regulatory policies and procedures of DOT is unnecessary. Currently, most vessel documentation transactions are conducted by mail. Therefore, the primary effect of this rule upon the affected public will be that vessel documentation materials will now be mailed to the National Vessel Documentation Center rather than a regional vessel documentation office. Furthermore, the consolidation will permit the Coast Guard to implement aggressive management measures, including the internal shifting of documentation resources to address potential backlogs, the use of office automation technology, and the expansion of electronic submission of documentation materials, to further minimize any economic impact.

Small Entities

Under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), the Coast Guard must consider the economic impact on small entities of a rule for which a general notice of proposed rulemaking is required. "Small entities" may include (1) small businesses and not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields and (2) governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. This rule does not require a general notice of proposed rulemaking and, therefore, is exempt from the requirements of the Act.

Although this rule is exempt, the Coast Guard has reviewed it for potential impact on small entities. The Coast Guard is mindful that a number of vessel documentation transactions submitted to it are submitted by vessel documentation services that qualify as small business entities. With these entities specifically in mind, the Coast Guard conducted a series of public meetings during September through November 1994. These public meetings were held at various locations around the country, primarily in port cities where a Coast Guard regional vessel documentation office was located, so that attendance would be convenient. The purpose of these meetings was to announce the pending consolidation of vessel documentation functions. In those meetings, the Coast Guard also sought input from the public, particularly lending institutions and small business entity vessel documentation services, on methods to

make a centralized vessel documentation office operate more efficiently, with emphasis on the delivery of services. One of the suggestions which developed from those public meetings was the notion of permitting certain instruments to be submitted by facsimile for filing purposes. That suggestion developed into a rulemaking project and will be in place when the National Vessel Documentation Center opens for business. Other suggestions referred to the elimination of delays between the time of submission of documentation materials and the delivery of the related service.

Most of the small business entity vessel documentation services deal largely with recreational vessels. These kinds of vessels tend to be concentrated in certain locations. As a result, some of the regional documentation offices were required to service large recreational vessel fleets, while other offices had a much smaller number of recreational vessels in their fleet of responsibility. In those ports with large recreational vessel fleets, service backlogs developed. Through use of an aggressive backlog management program, these backlogs have been eliminated.

With consolidation will come a number of benefits that will assist the Coast Guard to better manage its work flow. No longer will one port, with limited personnel resources, have to service a recreational vessel fleet that may be many times larger than that serviced by another port. The consolidation of all vessel documentation billets in the Coast Guard will permit documentation materials submitted from all areas of the country to be handled in one workflow process. The economies of scale that will be achieved, the ability to shift internal resources to meet fluctuations in work, the application of office automation technology, and the ability to establish consistent work practices will address the concerns of the small business entity vessel documentation services. As a result, the Coast Guard's position is that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Therefore, the Coast Guard certifies under section 605(b) of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Collection of Information

This rule contains no collection-of-information requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

Federalism

The Coast Guard has analyzed this rule under the principles and criteria contained in Executive Order 12612 and has determined that this rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

Environment

The Coast Guard considered the environmental impact of this rule and concluded that, under paragraph 2.B.2 of Commandant Instruction M16475.1B, as revised (59 FR 38654; July 29, 1994), this rule is categorically excluded from further environmental documentation. This rule has been determined to be categorically excluded because the changes made to the regulations are administrative in nature and clearly have no environmental impact. A "Categorical Exclusion Determination" is available in the docket for inspection or copying where indicated under ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects

46 CFR Part 67

Fees, Incorporation by reference, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Vessels.

46 CFR Part 68

Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Vessels.

46 CFR Part 69

Measurement standards, Penalties, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Vessels.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Coast Guard amends 46 CFR parts 67, 68, and 69 as follows:

PART 67—[Amended]

1. The authority citation for part 67 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 14 U.S.C. 664; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 42 U.S.C. 9118; 46 U.S.C. 2103, 2107, 2110; 46 U.S.C. app. 841a, 876; 49 CFR 1.46.

2. Section 67.3 is amended by removing the note following the definition "Commandant", removing the definitions "Port of documentation" and "Port of record", and adding in alphabetical order the definition "National Vessel Documentation Center" to read as follows:

§ 67.3 Definitions.

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National Vessel Documentation Center means the organizational unit designated by the Commandant to process vessel documentation transactions and maintain vessel documentation records. The address is: