

with 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1501.6. In addition to scoping meetings, numerous public involvement initiatives, including public meetings, newsletters, and stakeholder and local official briefings, will be held throughout the course of study. A Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review prior to a public hearing. Public notice will be given, in local newspapers, of the availability of the Draft EIS and the time and place of all public meetings and the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: June 21, 2012.

**Charles W. Bolinger,**  
Division Administrator, Baton Rouge,  
Louisiana.

[FR Doc. 2012-15662 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Highway Administration

#### Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP)

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Section 5207 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP). The FHWA anticipates that the STEP or a similar program to provide resources for national research on issues related to planning, environment, and realty will be included in future surface transportation legislation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, the FHWA expects to seek partnerships with other Federal agencies and tribes, State and local governments, and nongovernmental stakeholders that can leverage limited research funding in the STEP with other

stakeholders and partners in order to increase the total amount of resources available to meet the Nation's surface transportation research needs. The purpose of this notice is to announce the STEP implementation strategy for FY 2013 and to request suggested lines of research for the FY 2013 STEP via the STEP Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/index.htm> in anticipation of future surface transportation legislation.

**DATES:** Suggestions for lines of research should be submitted to the STEP Web site on or before September 26, 2012.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Gabe Rousseau, Acting Director, Office of Human Environment, (202) 366-8044, [Gabe.Rousseau@dot.gov](mailto:Gabe.Rousseau@dot.gov) or Seetha Srinivasan, Office of the Chief Counsel, (202) 366-4099; Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Electronic Access**

This document may be viewed online through the Federal eRulemaking portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Electronic submission and retrieval help and guidelines are available on the Web site. It is available 24 hours each day, 366 days this year. Please follow the instructions. An electronic copy of this document may also be downloaded from the Office of the Federal Register's home page at: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register> and the Government Printing Office's Web page at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys>.

**Background**

Section 5207 of SAFETEA-LU (Pub. L. 109-59, Aug. 10, 2005), established the STEP in Section 507 of Title 23, United States Code. The FHWA anticipates that the STEP or a similar program to provide resources for national research on issues related to planning, environment, and realty will be included in future surface transportation legislation. The general objective of the STEP is to improve understanding of the complex relationship between surface transportation, planning, and the environment.

The SAFETEA-LU provided \$16.875 million per year for FY 2006-2009 to implement this cooperative research program. Due to obligation limitations, rescissions, and congressional designations of Title V Research in SAFETEA-LU, an average of \$14.5 million of the authorized \$16.875

million was only available each fiscal year to help implement the cooperative research program.

The STEP is the primary source of funds for FHWA to conduct research and develop tools and technologies to advance the state of the practice regarding national surface transportation and environmental decisionmaking. In FY 2013, the FHWA expects to seek partnerships with other Federal agencies and tribes; State and local governments; and nongovernmental transportation and environmental stakeholders. These partnerships can help leverage limited research funding in the STEP and increase the total amount of resources available to meet the Nation's surface transportation research needs.

The FY 2013 STEP will support the implementation of a national research agenda that includes:

- (1) Enhancing knowledge of strategies and tools available to accelerate project delivery while improving environmental outcomes;
- (2) Conducting research to develop climate change mitigation, adaptation, and livability strategies;
- (3) Developing and supporting accurate models and tools for evaluating transportation measures and developing indicators of economic, social, and environmental performance of transportation systems to facilitate alternative analysis;
- (4) Developing and deploying research to address congestion reduction efforts;
- (5) Developing transportation safety planning strategies for surface transportation systems and improvements;
- (6) Improving planning, operation, and management of surface transportation systems and rights-of-way;
- (7) Enhancing knowledge of strategies to improve transportation in rural areas and small communities;
- (8) Strengthening and advancing State/local and tribal capabilities regarding surface transportation and the environment;
- (9) Improving transportation decisionmaking and coordination across international borders;
- (10) Improving state of the practice regarding the impact of transportation on the environment;
- (11) Conducting research to promote environmental streamlining/stewardship and sustainability;
- (12) Exchanging knowledge and strategies to improve performance-based planning and programming for transportation;

(13) Conducting research to identify, share, and test best practices to promote transportation and livability linkages;

(14) Disseminating research results and advances in state of the practice through peer exchanges, workshops, conferences, etc.;

(15) Meeting additional priorities as determined by the Secretary; and

(16) Refining the scope and research emphases through active outreach and consultation with stakeholders.

The FHWA is issuing this notice to:

(1) Announce the STEP Implementation Strategy for the FY 2013 STEP in anticipation of future surface transportation legislation, and (2) Solicit comments on proposed research activities to be undertaken in the FY 2013 STEP via the STEP Web site. The STEP Implementation Strategy can be found at [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/about\\_step/strategy/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/about_step/strategy/). That Strategy updates information on the graphs and charts regarding historical planning and environment research funding, and adds information about the proposed FY 2013 STEP including proposed funding levels, goals, and potential research activities. We invite the public to visit this Web site to obtain additional information on the STEP, as well as information on the process for forwarding comments to the FHWA regarding the STEP implementation plan. The URL for the STEP Web site is: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/>.

The FHWA will use this Web site as a major mechanism for informing the public regarding the status of the STEP.

**Authority:** 23 U.S.C. 507.

#### **OMB Approval for Specific Forms, Surveys, Questionnaires: Burden Statement**

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to identify potential research for the creation of a research plan for the FHWA STEP Program. Public reporting burden is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. No confidential information will be collected; therefore, no assurances of confidentiality will be provided. Please note that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 2125-0627 (Expiration 6/30/14). Send comments regarding this

burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

**Authority:** 5 CFR 1320.8.

Issued on: June 20, 2012.

**Victor M. Mendez,**

*Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 2012-15895 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Maritime Administration**

**[Docket No. MARAD-2012 0073]**

#### **Requested Administrative Waiver of the Coastwise Trade Laws: Vessel ACURA JIGGER; Invitation for Public Comments**

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As authorized by 46 U.S.C. 12121, the Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to grant waivers of the U.S.-built requirement of the coastwise laws under certain circumstances. A request for such a waiver has been received by MARAD. The vessel, and a brief description of the proposed service, is listed below.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before July 30, 2012.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should refer to docket number MARAD-2012-0073. Written comments may be submitted by hand or by mail to the Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. You may also send comments electronically via the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection and copying at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. An electronic version of this document and all documents entered into this docket is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joann Spittle, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey

Avenue SE., Room W21-203, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-5979, Email [Joann.Spittle@dot.gov](mailto:Joann.Spittle@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** As described by the applicant the intended service of the vessel ACURA JIGGER is:

*Intended Commercial Use of Vessel:* "Charter the vessel for recreational fishing, cruising waterways, water activities/swimming, snorkeling."

*Geographic Region:* "Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina."

The complete application is given in DOT docket MARAD-2012-0073 at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. If MARAD determines, in accordance with 46 U.S.C. 12121 and MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388, that the issuance of the waiver will have an unduly adverse effect on a U.S.-vessel builder or a business that uses U.S.-flag vessels in that business, a waiver will not be granted. Comments should refer to the docket number of this notice and the vessel name in order for MARAD to properly consider the comments. Comments should also state the commenter's interest in the waiver application, and address the waiver criteria given in § 388.4 of MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388.

*Privacy Act:* Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78).

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Dated: June 21, 2012.

**Julie P. Agarwal,**

*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2012-15726 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

#### **Information Collection Activities: Submission for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Review; Request for Comment**

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.