(63 FR 17919, April 10, 1998). The proposed policy statement was developed by the Department of Transportation in consultation with the Department of Justice and sets forth tentative findings and guidelines for use by DOT in evaluating whether major air carriers' competitive responses to new entry warrant enforcement action under 49 U.S.C. 41712. The due dates for comments and reply comments were June 9, 1998 and July 9, 1998, respectively.

On May 8, 1998, the Air Transport Association of America (ATA), an association of 22 U.S. airlines and five foreign carriers, filed an emergency petition requesting that the Department extend the time for filing comments by 120 days. The ATA stated that it was filing the petition on an emergency basis because fewer than 30 days remained in the comment period. It claimed that the 60-day time period originally set does not give the parties adequate time to prepare well-reasoned responses to the complicated economic, legal, and policy issues raised in the statement and that in order to participate in a full discussion of these issues, the ATA and its member airlines must consult with economic and legal experts. Since those experts must review studies, reports, and other data that address these issues, the ATA argued that the current 60-day comment period is inadequate.

The ATA also asserted that the Department has failed to identify the research and source material for its proposed statement on a timely basis and therefore an extension of the comment period is necessary. Citing Department rules in 49 CFR § 5.25(a), the ATA likewise stated the Secretary is to grant a petition for extension of time where the petitioner shows that additional time is in the public interest, so long as the petitioner has good cause for the extension and a substantive interest in the proposed action. The ATA claimed that the extension is clearly in the public interest and is consistent with previous similar Department rulemakings involving complex economic issues. Furthermore, as an association representing the entities that the statement would affect, the ATA pointed out that it has an obvious substantive interest.

We have determined that it would be reasonable and in the public interest to give commenters more time for preparing their responses to the proposed statement. While the issues are complex and the statement involves a major policy initiative, we do not agree, however, with the ATA that an extension of 120 days is necessary. The addition of 60 days to the 90 days already established for comments and reply comments provides commenters with a total of 150 days to prepare and provide remarks—an amount of time that we find is sufficient to balance the needs for an adequate comment period while not unnecessarily delaying the Department's initiative for promoting competition and protecting consumers. We will therefore give commenters an additional 60 days to prepare their comments and reply comments.

Specifically, the due date for comments will be extended to July 24, 1998 from June 9, 1998 and the due date for reply comments will be extended to September 8, 1998 from July 9, 1998. (Since the actual addition of 60 days results in a due date for reply comments of September 7, 1998—a Federal holiday, the due date for reply comments was extended to September 8, 1998.)

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 18, 1998, under authority delegated by 49 CFR 1.56(a).

Charles A. Hunnicutt,

Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs.

[FR Doc. 98–13698 Filed 5–19–98; 10:07 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[CGD08–97–050]

Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Committee (LMRWSAC) will meet to discuss various issues relating to navigational safety on the Lower Mississippi River and related waterways. The meeting will be open to the public.

DATES: LMRWSAC will meet on Monday, June 15, 1998, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. This meeting may close early if all business is finished. Written material and requests to make oral presentations should reach the Coast Guard on or before June 5, 1998. Requests to have a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee or subcommittee should reach the Coast Guard on or before June 5, 1998.

ADDRESSES: LMRWSAC will meet in the basement conference room of the Hale Boggs Federal Building, 501 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA. Send written material and requests to make oral presentations to Mr. M.M. Ledet, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District (m), 501 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130–3396.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: M.M. Ledet, committee administrator, telephone 504–589–4686, fax 504–589–4999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

Agendas of Meeting

Lower Mississippi River Waterways Safety Advisory Committee (MLRWSAC). The agenda includes the following:

(1) Introduction of committee members.
(2) Introduction and remarks by RADM P. Pluta, Committee Sponsor.
(3) Approval of the January 28, 1998 minutes.
(4) Old Business.
a. Widening of the navigational channel.
b. VTS update.
c. Bridge clearance gauges.
(5) New Business.
a. South Pass dredging.
b. Bear Industries permit request.
c. Southwest Pass wingdam.
d. Visual surveillance of area around new steel dock at Mississippi River mile 161.0.
(6) Next meeting.
(7) Adjournment.

Procedural

The meeting is open to the public. At the Chairs' discretion, members of the public may make oral presentations during the meetings. If you would like to make an oral presentation at a meeting, please notify the Committee Administrator no later than June 5, 1998. Written material for distribution at a meeting should reach the Coast Guard no later than June 5, 1998. If you would like a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee or subcommittee in advance of a meeting, please submit 28 copies to the Committee Administrator no later than June 5, 1998.

Information on Services for Individuals with Disabilities

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact the Committee Administrator as soon as possible.

Dated: May 5, 1998.

A.L. Gerfin, Jr.,

Capt., USCG, Acting Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District.

[FR Doc. 98–13640 Filed 5–20–98; 8:45 am]

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