

(4) “deep seabed” means the seabed, and the subsoil thereof to a depth of ten meters, lying seaward of and outside—

(A) the Continental Shelf of any nation; and

(B) any area of national resource jurisdiction of any foreign nation, if such area extends beyond the Continental Shelf of such nation and such jurisdiction is recognized by the United States;

(5) “exploration” means—

(A) any at-sea observation and evaluation activity which has, as its objective, the establishment and documentation of—

(i) the nature, shape, concentration, location, and tenor of a hard mineral resource; and

(ii) the environmental, technical, and other appropriate factors which must be taken into account to achieve commercial recovery; and

(B) the taking from the deep seabed of such quantities of any hard mineral resource as are necessary for the design, fabrication, and testing of equipment which is intended to be used in the commercial recovery and processing of such resource;

(6) “hard mineral resource” means any deposit or accretion on, or just below, the surface of the deep seabed of nodules which include one or more minerals, at least one of which contains manganese, nickel, cobalt, or copper;

(7) “international agreement” means a comprehensive agreement concluded through negotiations at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, relating to (among other matters) the exploration for and commercial recovery of hard mineral resources and the establishment of an international regime for the regulation thereof;

(8) “licensee” means the holder of a license issued under subchapter I of this chapter to engage in exploration;

(9) “permittee” means the holder of a permit issued under subchapter I of this chapter to engage in commercial recovery;

(10) “person” means any United States citizen, any individual, and any corporation, partnership, joint venture, association, or other entity organized or existing under the laws of any nation;

(11) “reciprocating state” means any foreign nation designated as such by the Administrator under section 1428 of this title;

(12) “Administrator” means the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(13) “United States” means the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, and any other Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States; and

(14) “United States citizen” means—

(A) any individual who is a citizen of the United States;

(B) any corporation, partnership, joint venture, association, or other entity organized or existing under the laws of any of the United States; and

(C) any corporation, partnership, joint venture, association, or other entity (whether organized or existing under the laws of any of the United States or a foreign nation) if the controlling interest in such entity is held by an individual or entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(Pub. L. 96-283, § 4, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 555.)

SUBCHAPTER I—REGULATION OF EXPLORATION AND COMMERCIAL RECOVERY BY UNITED STATES CITIZENS

§ 1411. Prohibited activities by United States citizens

(a) Prohibited activities and exceptions

(1) No United States citizen may engage in any exploration or commercial recovery unless authorized to do so under—

(A) a license or a permit issued under this subchapter;

(B) a license, permit, or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state; or

(C) an international agreement which is in force with respect to the United States.

(2) The prohibitions of this subsection shall not apply to any of the following activities:

(A) Scientific research, including that concerning hard mineral resources.

(B) Mapping, or the taking of any geophysical, geochemical, oceanographic, or atmospheric measurements or random bottom samplings of the deep seabed, if such taking does not significantly alter the surface or subsurface of the deep seabed or significantly affect the environment.

(C) The design, construction, or testing of equipment and facilities which will or may be used for exploration or commercial recovery, if such design, construction, or testing is conducted on shore, or does not involve the recovery of any but incidental hard mineral resources.

(D) The furnishing of machinery, products, supplies, services, or materials for any exploration or commercial recovery conducted under a license or permit issued under this subchapter, a license or permit or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state, or under an international agreement.

(E) Activities, other than exploration or commercial recovery activities, of the Federal Government.

(b) Existing exploration

(1) Subsection (a)(1)(A) of this section shall not be deemed to prohibit any United States citizen who is engaged in exploration before June 28, 1980, from continuing to engage in such exploration—

(A) if such citizen applies for a license under section 1413(a) of this title with respect to such exploration within such reasonable period of time, after the date on which initial regulations to implement section 1413(a) of this title are issued, as the Administrator shall prescribe; and

(B) until such license is issued to such citizen or a final administrative or judicial determination is made affirming the denial of cer-

tification of the application for, or issuance of, such license.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if the President by Executive order determines that immediate suspension of exploration activities is necessary for the reasons set forth in section 1416(a)(2)(B) of this title or the Administrator determines that immediate suspension of activities is necessary to prevent a significant adverse effect on the environment or to preserve the safety of life and property at sea, the Administrator is authorized, notwithstanding any other requirement of this chapter, to issue an emergency order requiring any United States citizen who is engaged in exploration before June 28, 1980, to immediately suspend exploration activities. The issuance of such emergency order is subject to judicial review as provided in chapter 7 of title 5.

(3) The timely filing of any application for a license under paragraph (1)(A) shall entitle the applicant to priority of right for the issuance of such license under section 1413(b) of this title. In any case in which more than one application referred to in paragraph (1) is filed based on exploration plans required by section 1413(a)(2) of this title which refer to all or part of the same deep seabed area, the Administrator shall, in taking action on such applications, apply principles of equity which take into consideration, among other things, the date on which the applicants or predecessors in interest, or component organizations thereof, commenced exploration activities and the continuity and extent of such exploration and amount of funds expended with respect to such exploration.

(c) Interference

No United States citizen may interfere or participate in interference with any activity conducted by any licensee or permittee which is authorized to be undertaken under a license or permit issued by the United States to the licensee or permittee under this chapter or with any activity conducted by the holder of, and authorized to be undertaken under, a license or permit or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state for the exploration or commercial recovery of hard mineral resources. United States citizens shall exercise their rights on the high seas with reasonable regard for the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedoms of the high seas.

(Pub. L. 96–283, title I, §101, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 557.)

§ 1412. Licenses for exploration and permits for commercial recovery

(a) Authority to issue

Subject to the provisions of this chapter, the Administrator shall issue to applicants who are eligible therefor licenses for exploration and permits for commercial recovery.

(b) Nature of licenses and permits

(1) A license or permit issued under this subchapter shall authorize the holder thereof to engage in exploration or commercial recovery, as the case may be, consistent with the provisions of this chapter, the regulations issued by the

Administrator to implement the provisions of this chapter, and the specific terms, conditions, and restrictions applied to the license or permit by the Administrator.

(2) Any license or permit issued under this subchapter shall be exclusive with respect to the holder thereof as against any other United States citizen or any citizen, national or governmental agency of, or any legal entity organized or existing under the laws of, any reciprocating state.

(3) A valid existing license shall entitle the holder, if otherwise eligible under the provisions of this chapter and regulations issued under this chapter, to a permit for commercial recovery. Such a permit recognizes the right of the holder to recover hard mineral resources, and to own, transport, use, and sell hard mineral resources recovered, under the permit and in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

(4) In the event of interference with the exploration or commercial recovery activities of a licensee or permittee by nationals of other states, the Secretary of State shall use all peaceful means to resolve the controversy by negotiation, conciliation, arbitration, or resort to agreed tribunals.

(c) Restrictions

(1) The Administrator may not issue—

(A) any license or permit after the date on which an international agreement is ratified by and enters into force with respect to the United States, except to the extent that issuance of such license or permit is not inconsistent with such agreement;

(B) any license or permit the exploration plan or recovery plan of which, submitted pursuant to section 1413(a)(2) of this title, would apply to an area to which applies, or would conflict with, (i) any exploration plan or recovery plan submitted with any pending application to which priority of right for issuance applies under section 1413(b) of this title, (ii) any exploration plan or recovery plan associated with any existing license or permit, or (iii) any equivalent authorization which has been issued, or for which formal notice of application has been submitted, by a reciprocating state prior to the filing date of any relevant application for licenses or permits pursuant to this subchapter;

(C) a permit authorizing commercial recovery within any area of the deep seabed in which exploration is authorized under a valid existing license if such permit is issued to other than the licensee for such area;

(D) any exploration license before July 1, 1981, or any permit which authorizes commercial recovery to commence before January 1, 1988;

(E) any license or permit the exploration plan or recovery plan for which applies to any area of the deep seabed if, within the 3-year period before the date of application for such license or permit, (i) the applicant therefor surrendered or relinquished such area under an exploration plan or recovery plan associated with a previous license or permit issued to such applicant, or (ii) a license or permit previously issued to the applicant had an explo-

ration plan or recovery plan which applied to such area and such license or permit was revoked under section 1416 of this title; or

(F) a license or permit, or approve the transfer of a license or permit, except to a United States citizen.

(2) No permittee may use any vessel for the commercial recovery of hard mineral resources or for the processing at sea of hard mineral resources recovered under the permit issued to the permittee unless the vessel is documented under the laws of the United States.

(3) Each permittee shall use at least one vessel documented under the laws of the United States for the transportation from each mining site of hard mineral resources recovered under the permit issued to the permittee.

(4) For purposes of the shipping laws of the United States, any vessel documented under the laws of the United States and used in the commercial recovery, processing, or transportation from any mining site of hard mineral resources recovered under a permit issued under this subchapter shall be deemed to be used in, and used in an essential service in, the foreign commerce or foreign trade of the United States, as defined in section 109 of title 46, and shall be deemed to be a vessel as defined in section 53701(13) of title 46.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the processing on land of hard mineral resources recovered pursuant to a permit shall be conducted within the United States: *Provided*, That the President does not determine that such restrictions contravene the overriding national interests of the United States. The Administrator may allow the processing of hard mineral resources at a place other than within the United States if he finds, after opportunity for an agency hearing, that—

(A) the processing of the quantity concerned of such resource at a place other than within the United States is necessary for the economic viability of the commercial recovery activities of a permittee; and

(B) satisfactory assurances have been given by the permittee that such resource, after processing, to the extent of the permittee's ownership therein, will be returned to the United States for domestic use, if the Administrator so requires after determining that the national interest necessitates such return.

(Pub. L. 96–283, title I, §102, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 558.)

CODIFICATION

In subsec. (c)(4), “section 109 of title 46” substituted for “section 905(a) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936” and “section 53701(13) of title 46” substituted for “section 1101(b) of that Act” on authority of Pub. L. 109–304, §18(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1709, which Act enacted sections 109 and 53701 of Title 46, Shipping.

§ 1413. License and permit applications, review, and certification

(a) Applications

(1) Any United States citizen may apply to the Administrator for the issuance or transfer of a license for exploration or a permit for commercial recovery.

(2)(A) Applications for issuance or transfer of licenses for exploration and permits for commercial recovery shall be made in such form and manner as the Administrator shall prescribe in general and uniform regulations and shall contain such relevant financial, technical, and environmental information as the Administrator may by regulations require as being necessary and appropriate for carrying out the provisions of this subchapter. In accordance with such regulations, each applicant for the issuance of a license shall submit an exploration plan as described in subparagraph (B), and each applicant for a permit shall submit a recovery plan as described in subparagraph (C).

(B) The exploration plan for a license shall set forth the activities proposed to be carried out during the period of the license, describe the area to be explored, and include the intended exploration schedule and methods to be used, the development and testing of systems for commercial recovery to take place under the terms of the license, an estimated schedule of expenditures, measures to protect the environment and to monitor the effectiveness of environmental safeguards and monitoring systems for commercial recovery, and such other information as is necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions of this subchapter. The area set forth in an exploration plan shall be of sufficient size to allow for intensive exploration.

(C) The recovery plan for a permit shall set forth the activities proposed to be carried out during the period of the permit, and shall include the intended schedule of commercial recovery, environmental safeguards and monitoring systems, details of the area or areas proposed for commercial recovery, a resource assessment thereof, the methods and technology to be used for commercial recovery and processing, the methods to be used for disposal of wastes from recovery and processing, and such other information as is necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions of this subchapter.

(D) The applicant shall select the size and location of the area of the exploration plan or recovery plan, which area shall be approved unless the Administrator finds that—

- (i) the area is not a logical mining unit; or
- (ii) commercial recovery activities in the proposed location would result in a significant adverse impact on the quality of the environment which cannot be avoided by the imposition of reasonable restrictions.

(E) For purposes of subparagraph (D), “logical mining unit” means—

(i) in the case of a license for exploration, an area of the deep seabed which can be explored under the license in an efficient, economical, and orderly manner with due regard for conservation and protection of the environment, taking into consideration the resource data, other relevant physical and environmental characteristics, and the state of the technology of the applicant as set forth in the exploration plan; or

(ii) in the case of a permit, an area of the deep seabed—

- (1) in which hard mineral resources can be recovered in sufficient quantities to satisfy

the permittee's estimated production requirements over the initial 20-year term of the permit in an efficient, economical, and orderly manner with due regard for conservation and protection of the environment, taking into consideration the resource data, other relevant physical and environmental characteristics, and the state of the technology of the applicant set out in the recovery plan;

(II) which is not larger than is necessary to satisfy the permittee's estimated production requirements over the initial 20-year term of the permit; and

(III) in relation to which the permittee's estimated production requirements are not found by the Administrator to be unreasonable.

(b) Priority of right for issuance

Subject to section 1411(b) of this title, priority of right for the issuance of licenses to applicants shall be established on the basis of the chronological order in which license applications which are in substantial compliance with the requirements established under subsection (a)(2) of this section are filed with the Administrator. Priority of right shall not be lost in the case of any application filed which is in substantial but not full compliance with such requirements if the applicant thereafter brings the application into conformity with such requirements within such reasonable period of time as the Administrator shall prescribe in regulations.

(c) Eligibility for certification

Before the Administrator may certify any application for issuance or transfer of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, the Administrator must find in writing, after consultation with other departments and agencies pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, that—

(1) the applicant has demonstrated that, upon issuance or transfer of the license or permit, the applicant will be financially responsible to meet all obligations which may be required of a licensee or permittee to engage in the exploration or commercial recovery proposed in the application;

(2) the applicant has demonstrated that, upon issuance or transfer of the license or permit, the applicant will have the technological capability to engage in such exploration or commercial recovery;

(3) the applicant has satisfactorily fulfilled all obligations under any license or permit previously issued or transferred to the applicant under this chapter; and

(4) the proposed exploration plan or recovery plan of the applicant meets the requirements of this chapter and the regulations issued under this chapter.

(d) Antitrust review

(1) Whenever the Administrator receives any application for issuance or transfer of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, the Administrator shall transmit promptly a complete copy of such application to the Attorney General of the United States and the Federal Trade Commission.

(2) The Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission shall conduct such antitrust review of the application as they deem appropriate and shall, if they deem appropriate, advise the Administrator of the likely effects of such issuance or transfer on competition.

(3) The Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission may make any recommendations they deem advisable to avoid any action upon such application by the Administrator which would create or maintain a situation inconsistent with the antitrust laws. Such recommendations may include, without limitation, the denial of issuance or transfer of the license or permit or issuance or transfer upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate.

(4) Any advice or recommendation submitted by the Attorney General or the Federal Trade Commission pursuant to this subsection shall be submitted within 90 days after receipt by them of the application. The Administrator shall not issue or transfer the license or permit during that 90-day period, except upon written confirmation by the Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission that neither intends to submit any further advice or recommendation with respect to the application.

(5) If the Administrator decides to issue or transfer the license or permit with respect to which denial of the issuance or transfer of the license or permit has been recommended by the Attorney General or the Federal Trade Commission, or to issue or transfer the license or permit without imposing those terms and conditions recommended by the Attorney General or the Federal Trade Commission as appropriate to prevent any situation inconsistent with the antitrust laws, the Administrator shall, prior to or upon issuance or transfer of the license or permit, notify the Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission of the reasons for such decision.

(6) The issuance or transfer of a license or permit under this subchapter shall not be admissible in any way as a defense to any civil or criminal action for violation of the antitrust laws of the United States, nor shall it in any way modify or abridge any private right of action under such laws.

(7) As used in this subsection, the term "antitrust laws" means the Act of July 2, 1890 (commonly known as the Sherman Act; 15 U.S.C. 1–7); sections 73 through 76 of the Act of August 27, 1894 (commonly known as the Wilson Tariff Act; 15 U.S.C. 8–11); the Clayton Act (15 U.S.C. 12 et seq.); the Act of June 19, 1936 (commonly known as the Robinson-Patman Price Discrimination Act; 15 U.S.C. 13–13b and 21a); and the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.).

(e) Other Federal agencies

The Administrator shall provide by regulation for full consultation and cooperation, prior to certification of an application for the issuance or transfer of any license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery and prior to the issuance or transfer of such a license or permit, with other Federal agencies or departments which have programs or activities within their statutory responsibilities which would be affected by the activities proposed in the applica-

tion for the issuance or transfer of a license or permit. Not later than 30 days after June 28, 1980, the heads of any Federal departments or agencies having expertise concerning, or jurisdiction over, any aspect of the recovery or processing of hard mineral resources shall transmit to the Administrator written comments as to their expertise or statutory responsibilities pursuant to this chapter or any other Federal law. To the extent possible, such agencies shall cooperate to reduce the number of separate actions required to satisfy the statutory responsibilities of these agencies. The Administrator shall transmit to each such agency or department a complete copy of each application and each such agency or department, based on its legal responsibilities and authorities, may, not later than 60 days after receipt of the application, recommend certification of the application, issuance or transfer of the license or permit, or denial of such certification, issuance, or transfer. In any case in which an agency or department recommends such a denial, it shall set forth in detail the manner in which the application does not comply with any law or regulation within its area of responsibility and shall indicate how the application may be amended, or how terms, conditions, or restrictions might be added to the license or permit, to assure compliance with such law or regulation.

(f) Review period

All time periods for the review of an application for issuance or transfer of a license or permit established pursuant to this section shall, to the maximum extent practicable, run concurrently from the date on which the application is received by the Administrator.

(g) Application certification

Upon making the applicable determinations and findings required in sections 1411, 1412 of this title, and this section with respect to any applicant for the issuance or transfer of a license or a permit and the exploration or commercial recovery proposed by such applicant, after completion of procedures for receiving the application required by this chapter, and upon payment by the applicant of the fee required under section 1414 of this title, the Administrator shall certify the application for the issuance or transfer of the license or permit. The Administrator, to the maximum extent possible, shall endeavor to complete certification action on the application within 100 days after its submission. If final certification or denial of certification has not occurred within 100 days after submission of the application, the Administrator shall inform the applicant in writing of the then pending unresolved issues, the Administrator's efforts to resolve them, and an estimate of the time required to do so.

(Pub. L. 96–283, title I, §103, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 560; Pub. L. 107–273, div. C, title IV, §14102(c)(2)(E), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1921.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Act of July 2, 1890 (commonly known as the Sherman Act; 15 U.S.C. 1–7), referred to in subsec. (d)(7), is act July 2, 1890, ch. 647, 26 Stat. 209, as amended, which is classified to sections 1 to 7 of Title 15, Commerce and Trade. For complete classification of this Act to the

Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1 of Title 15 and Tables.

Sections 73 through 76 of the Act of August 27, 1894 (commonly known as the Wilson Tariff Act; 15 U.S.C. 8–11), referred to in subsec. (d)(7), are sections 73 to 76 of act Aug. 27, 1894, ch. 349, 28 Stat. 570, as amended, which enacted sections 8 to 11 of Title 15. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 8 of Title 15 and Tables.

The Clayton Act (15 U.S.C. 12 et seq.), referred to in subsec. (d)(7), is act Oct. 15, 1914, ch. 323, 38 Stat. 730, as amended, which is classified generally to sections 12, 13, 14 to 19, 21, and 22 to 27 of Title 15, and sections 52 and 53 of Title 29, Labor. For further details and complete classification of this Act to the Code, see References in Text note set out under section 12 of Title 15 and Tables.

Act of June 19, 1936 (commonly known as the Robinson-Patman Price Discrimination Act; 15 U.S.C. 13–13b and 21a), referred to in subsec. (d)(7), is act June 19, 1936, ch. 592, 49 Stat. 1526, also known as the Robinson-Patman Antidiscrimination Act, which enacted sections 13a, 13b, and 21a of Title 15, and amended section 13 of Title 15. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 13 of Title 15 and Tables.

The Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.), referred to in subsec. (d)(7), is act Sept. 26, 1914, ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717, as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§41 et seq.) of chapter 2 of Title 15. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 58 of Title 15 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (d)(7). Pub. L. 107–273 substituted “76” for “77”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 107–273 effective Nov. 2, 2002, and applicable only with respect to cases commenced on or after Nov. 2, 2002, see section 14103 of Pub. L. 107–273, set out as a note under section 3 of Title 15, Commerce and Trade.

§ 1414. License and permit fees

No application for the issuance or transfer of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery shall be certified unless the applicant pays to the Administrator a reasonable administrative fee which shall be deposited into miscellaneous receipts of the Treasury. The amount of the administrative fee imposed by the Administrator on any applicant shall reflect the reasonable administrative costs incurred in reviewing and processing the application.

(Pub. L. 96–283, title I, §104, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 563.)

§ 1415. License and permit terms, conditions, and restrictions; issuance and transfer of licenses and permits

(a) Eligibility for issuance or transfer of license or permit

Before issuing or transferring a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, the Administrator must find in writing, after consultation with interested departments and agencies pursuant to section 1413(e) of this title, and upon considering public comments received with respect to the license or permit, that the exploration or commercial recovery proposed in the application—

(1) will not unreasonably interfere with the exercise of the freedoms of the high seas by

other states, as recognized under general principles of international law;

(2) will not conflict with any international obligation of the United States established by any treaty or international convention in force with respect to the United States;

(3) will not create a situation which may reasonably be expected to lead to a breach of international peace and security involving armed conflict;

(4) cannot reasonably be expected to result in a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment, taking into account the analyses and information in any applicable environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to section 1419(c) or 1419(d) of this title; and

(5) will not pose an inordinate threat to the safety of life and property at sea.

(b) Issuance and transfer of licenses and permits with terms, conditions, and restrictions

(1) Within 180 days after certification of any application for the issuance or transfer of a license or permit under section 1413(g) of this title, the Administrator shall propose terms and conditions for, and restrictions on, the exploration or commercial recovery proposed in the application which are consistent with the provisions of this chapter and regulations issued under this chapter. If additional time is needed, the Administrator shall notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the delay and indicate the approximate date on which the proposed terms, conditions, and restrictions will be completed. The Administrator shall provide to each applicant a written statement of the proposed terms, conditions, and restrictions. Such terms, conditions, and restrictions shall be generally specified in regulations with general criteria and standards to be used in establishing such terms, conditions, and restrictions for a license or permit and shall be uniform in all licenses or permits, except to the extent that differing physical and environmental conditions require the establishment of special terms, conditions, and restrictions for the conservation of natural resources, protection of the environment, or the safety of life and property at sea.

(2) After preparation and consideration of the final environmental impact statement pursuant to section 1419(d) of this title on the proposed issuance of a license or permit and subject to the other provisions of this chapter, the Administrator shall issue to the applicant the license or permit with the terms, conditions, and restrictions incorporated therein.

(3) The licensee or permittee to whom a license or permit is issued or transferred shall be deemed to have accepted the terms, conditions, and restrictions in the license or permit if the licensee or permittee does not notify the Administrator within 60 days after receipt of the license or permit of each term, condition, or restriction with which the licensee or permittee takes exception. The licensee or permittee may, in addition to such objections as may be raised under applicable provisions of law, object to any term, condition, or restriction on the ground that the term, condition, or restriction is inconsistent with this chapter or the regulations pro-

mulgated thereunder. If, after the Administrator takes final action on these objections, the licensee or permittee demonstrates that a dispute remains on a material issue of fact, the licensee or permittee is entitled to a decision on the record after the opportunity for an agency hearing pursuant to sections 556 and 557 of title 5. Any such decision made by the Administrator shall be subject to judicial review as provided in chapter 7 of title 5.

(c) Modification and revision of terms, conditions, and restrictions

(1) After the issuance or transfer of any license or permit under subsection (b) of this section, the Administrator, after consultation with interested agencies and the licensee or permittee, may modify any term, condition, or restriction in such license or permit—

(A) to avoid unreasonable interference with the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedoms of the high seas, as recognized under general principles of international law;

(B) if relevant data and other information (including, but not limited to, data resulting from exploration or commercial recovery activities under the license or permit) indicate that modification is required to protect the quality of the environment or to promote the safety of life and property at sea and if such modification is consistent with the regulations issued to carry out section 1419(b) of this title;

(C) to avoid a conflict with any international obligation of the United States, established by any treaty or convention in force with respect to the United States, as determined in writing by the President; or

(D) to avoid any situation which may reasonably be expected to lead to a breach of international peace and security involving armed conflict, as determined in writing by the President.

(2) During the term of a license or a permit, the licensee or permittee may submit to the Administrator an application for a revision of the license or permit or the exploration plan or recovery plan associated with the license or permit. The Administrator shall approve such application upon a finding in writing that the revision will comply with the requirements of this chapter and the regulations issued under this chapter.

(3) The Administrator shall establish, by regulation, guidelines for a determination of the scale or extent of a proposed modification or revision for which any or all license or permit application requirements and procedures, including a public hearing, shall apply. Any increase in the size of the area, or any change in the location of an area, to which an exploration plan or a recovery plan applies, except an incidental increase or change, must be made by application for another license or permit.

(4) The procedures set forth in subsection (b)(3) of this section shall apply with respect to any modification under this subsection in the same manner, and to the same extent, as if such modification were an initial term, condition, or restriction proposed by the Administrator.

(d) Prior consultations

Prior to making a determination to issue, transfer, modify, or renew a license or permit under this section, the Administrator shall consult with any affected Regional Fishery Management Council established pursuant to section 1852 of title 16, if the activities undertaken pursuant to such license or permit could adversely affect any fishery within the Fishery Conservation Zone, or any anadromous species or Continental Shelf fishery resource subject to the exclusive management authority of the United States beyond such zone.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §105, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 563; Pub. L. 96-561, title II, §238(b), Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3300; Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title I, §101(a) [title II, §211(b)], Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009, 3009-41.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Fishery Conservation Zone, referred to in subsec. (d), probably means the fishery conservation zone established by section 1811 of Title 16, Conservation, which as amended generally by Pub. L. 99-659, title I, §101(b), Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3706, relates to United States sovereign rights and fishery management authority over fish within the exclusive economic zone as defined in section 1802 of Title 16.

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104-208 made technical amendment to reference in original act which appears in text as reference to section 1852 of title 16.

1980—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 96-561 made technical amendment to reference in original act which appears in text as reference to section 1852 of title 16.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Section 101(a) [title II, §211(b)] of div. A of Pub. L. 104-208 provided that the amendment made by that section is effective 15 days after Oct. 11, 1996.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Section 238(b) of Pub. L. 96-561 provided that the amendment made by that section is effective 15 days after Dec. 22, 1980.

§ 1416. Denial of certification of applications and of issuance, transfer, suspension, and revocation of licenses and permits; suspension and modification of activities

(a) Denial, suspension, modification, and revocation

(1) The Administrator may deny certification of an application for the issuance or transfer of, and may deny the issuance or transfer of, a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery if the Administrator finds that the applicant, or the activities proposed to be undertaken by the applicant, do not meet the requirements set forth in section 1413(c) of this title, section 1415(a) of this title, or in any other provision of this chapter, or any regulation issued under this chapter, for the issuance or transfer of a license or permit.

(2) The Administrator may—

(A) in addition to, or in lieu of, the imposition of any civil penalty under section 1462(a) of this title, or in addition to the imposition of any fine under section 1463 of this title, suspend or revoke any license or permit issued under this chapter, or suspend or modify any

particular activities under such a license or permit, if the licensee or permittee, as the case may be, substantially fails to comply with any provision of this chapter, any regulation issued under this chapter, or any term, condition, or restriction of the license or permit; and

(B) suspend or modify particular activities under any license or permit, if the President determines that such suspension or modification is necessary (i) to avoid any conflict with any international obligation of the United States established by any treaty or convention in force with respect to the United States, or (ii) to avoid any situation which may reasonably be expected to lead to a breach of international peace and security involving armed conflict.

(3) No action may be taken by the Administrator to deny issuance or transfer of or to revoke any license or permit or, except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, to suspend any license or permit or suspend or modify particular activities under a license or permit, unless the Administrator—

(A) publishes in the Federal Register and gives the applicant, licensee, or permittee, as the case may be, written notice of the intention of the Administrator to deny the issuance or transfer of or to suspend, modify, or revoke the license or permit and the reason therefor; and

(B) if the reason for the proposed denial, suspension, modification, or revocation is a deficiency which the applicant, licensee, or permittee can correct, affords the applicant, licensee, or permittee a reasonable time, but not more than 180 days from the date of the notice or such longer period as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown, to correct such deficiency.

(4) The Administrator shall deny issuance or transfer of, or suspend or revoke, any license or permit or order the suspension or modification of particular activities under a license or permit—

(A) on the thirtieth day after the date of the notice given to the applicant, licensee, or permittee under paragraph (3)(A) unless before such day the applicant, licensee, or permittee requests a review of the proposed denial, suspension, modification, or revocation; or

(B) on the last day of the period established under paragraph (3)(B) in which the applicant, licensee, or permittee must correct a deficiency, if such correction has not been made before such day.

(b) Administrative review of proposed denial, suspension, modification, or revocation

Any applicant, licensee, or permittee, as the case may be, who makes a timely request under subsection (a) of this section for review of a denial of issuance or transfer, or a suspension or revocation, of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, or a suspension or modification of particular activities under such a license or permit, is entitled to an adjudication on the record after an opportunity for an agency hearing with respect to such denial or suspension, revocation, or modification.

(c) Effect on activities; emergency orders

The issuance of any notice of proposed suspension or revocation of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery or proposed suspension or modification of particular activities under such a license or permit shall not affect the continuation of exploration or commercial recovery activities by the licensee or permittee. The provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (a) of this section and the first sentence of this subsection shall not apply when the President determines by Executive order that an immediate suspension of a license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, or immediate suspension or modification of particular activities under such a license or permit, is necessary for the reasons set forth in subsection (a)(2)(B) of this section, or the Administrator determines that an immediate suspension of such a license or permit, or immediate suspension or modification of particular activities under such a license or permit, is necessary to prevent a significant adverse effect on the environment or to preserve the safety of life and property at sea, and the Administrator issues an emergency order requiring such immediate suspension.

(d) Judicial review

Any determination of the Administrator, after any appropriate administrative review under subsection (b) of this section, to certify or deny certification of an application for the issuance or transfer of, or to issue, deny issuance of, transfer, deny the transfer of, modify, renew, suspend, or revoke any license for exploration or permit for commercial recovery, or suspend or modify particular activities under such a license or permit, or any immediate suspension of such a license or permit, or immediate suspension or modification of particular activities under such a license or permit, pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, is subject to judicial review as provided in chapter 7 of title 5.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §106, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 565.)

§ 1417. Duration of licenses and permits**(a) Duration of a license**

Each license for exploration shall be issued for a period of 10 years. If the licensee has substantially complied with the license and the exploration plan associated therewith and has requested extensions of the license, the Administrator shall extend the license on terms, conditions, and restrictions consistent with this chapter and the regulations issued under this chapter for periods of not more than 5 years each.

(b) Duration of a permit

Each permit for commercial recovery shall be issued for a term of 20 years and for so long thereafter as hard mineral resources are recovered annually in commercial quantities from the area to which the recovery plan associated with the permit applies. The permit of any permittee who is not recovering hard mineral resources in commercial quantities at the end of 10 years shall be terminated; except that the Administrator shall for good cause shown, including force majeure, adverse economic conditions, un-

avoidable delays in construction, major unanticipated vessel repairs that prevent the permittee from conducting commercial recovery activities during an annual period, or other circumstances beyond the control of the permittee, extend the 10-year period, but not beyond the initial 20-year term of the permit.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §107, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 567.)

§ 1418. Diligence requirements**(a) In general**

The exploration plan or recovery plan and the terms, conditions, and restrictions of each license and permit issued under this subchapter shall be designed to assure diligent development. Each licensee shall pursue diligently the activities described in the exploration plan of the licensee, and each permittee shall pursue diligently the activities described in the recovery plan of the permittee.

(b) Expenditures

Each license shall require such periodic reasonable expenditures for exploration by the licensee as the Administrator shall establish, taking into account the size of the area of the deep seabed to which the exploration plan associated with the license applies and the amount of funds which is estimated by the Administrator to be required for commercial recovery of hard mineral resources to begin within the time limit established by the Administrator. Such required expenditures shall not be established at a level which would discourage exploration by persons with less costly technology than is prevalently in use.

(c) Commercial recovery

Once commercial recovery is achieved, the Administrator shall, within reasonable limits and taking into consideration all relevant factors, require the permittee to maintain commercial recovery throughout the period of the permit; except that the Administrator shall for good cause shown, including force majeure, adverse economic conditions, or other circumstances beyond the control of the permittee, authorize the temporary suspension of commercial recovery activities. The duration of such a suspension shall not exceed one year at any one time, unless the Administrator determines that conditions justify an extension of the suspension.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §108, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 567.)

§ 1419. Protection of the environment**(a) Environmental assessment****(1) Deep ocean mining environmental study (DOMES)**

The Administrator shall expand and accelerate the program assessing the effects on the environment from exploration and commercial recovery activities, including seabased processing and the disposal at sea of processing wastes, so as to provide an assessment, as accurate as practicable, of environmental impacts of such activities for the implementation of subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(2) Supporting ocean research

The Administrator also shall conduct a continuing program of ocean research to support environmental assessment activity through the period of exploration and commercial recovery authorized by this chapter. The program shall include the development, acceleration, and expansion, as appropriate, of studies of the ecological, geological, and physical aspects of the deep seabed in general areas of the ocean where exploration and commercial development under the authority of this chapter are likely to occur, including, but not limited to—

- (A) natural diversity of the deep seabed biota;
- (B) life histories of major benthic, mid-water, and surface organisms most likely to be affected by commercial recovery activities;
- (C) long- and short-term effects of commercial recovery on the deep seabed biota; and
- (D) assessment of the effects of seabased processing activities.

Within 160 days after June 28, 1980, the Administrator shall prepare a plan to carry out the program described in this subsection, including necessary funding levels for the next five fiscal years, and shall submit the plan to the Congress.

(b) Terms, conditions, and restrictions

Each license and permit issued under this subchapter shall contain such terms, conditions, and restrictions, established by the Administrator, which prescribe the actions the licensee or permittee shall take in the conduct of exploration and commercial recovery activities to assure protection of the environment. The Administrator shall require in all activities under new permits, and wherever practicable in activities under existing permits, the use of the best available technologies for the protection of safety, health, and the environment wherever such activities would have a significant effect on safety, health, or the environment, except where the Administrator determines that the incremental benefits are clearly insufficient to justify the incremental costs of using such technologies. Before establishing such terms, conditions, and restrictions, the Administrator shall consult with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, concerning such terms, conditions, and restrictions, and the Administrator shall take into account and give due consideration to the information contained in each final environmental impact statement prepared with respect to such license or permit pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

(c) Programmatic environmental impact statement

(1) If the Administrator, in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and with the assistance of other appropriate Federal agencies, determines that a programmatic environmental impact statement is required, the Administrator shall, as soon as

practicable after June 28, 1980, with respect to the areas of the oceans in which any United States citizen is expected to undertake exploration and commercial recovery under the authority of this chapter—

(A) prepare and publish draft programmatic environmental impact statements which assess the environmental impacts of exploration and commercial recovery in such areas;

(B) afford all interested parties a reasonable time after such dates of publication to submit comments to the Administrator on such draft statements; and

(C) thereafter prepare (giving full consideration to all comments submitted under subparagraph (B)) and publish final programmatic environmental impact statements regarding such areas.

(2) With respect to the area of the oceans in which exploration and commercial recovery by any United States citizen will likely first occur under the authority of this chapter, the Administrator shall prepare a draft and final programmatic environmental impact statement as required under paragraph (1), except that—

(A) the draft programmatic environmental impact statement shall be prepared and published as soon as practicable but not later than 270 days (or such longer period as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown) after June 28, 1980; and

(B) the final programmatic environmental impact statement shall be prepared and published within 180 days (or such longer period as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown) after the date on which the draft statement is published.

(d) Environmental impact statements on issuance of licenses and permits

The issuance of, but not the certification of an application for, any license or permit under this subchapter shall be deemed to be a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment for purposes of section 4332 of title 42. In preparing an environmental impact statement pursuant to this subsection, the Administrator shall consult with the agency heads referred to in subsection (b) of this section and shall take into account, and give due consideration to, the relevant information contained in any applicable studies and any other environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to this section. Each draft environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to this subsection shall be published, with the terms, conditions, and restrictions proposed pursuant to section 1415(b) of this title, within 180 days (or such longer period as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown in writing) following the date on which the application for the license or permit concerned is certified by the Administrator. Each final environmental impact statement shall be published 180 days (or such longer period as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown in writing) following the date on which the draft environmental impact statement is published.

(e) Effect on other law

For the purposes of this chapter, any vessel or other floating craft engaged in commercial re-

covery or exploration shall not be deemed to be “a vessel or other floating craft” under section 502(12)(B) of the Clean Water Act [33 U.S.C. 1362(12)(B)] and any discharge of a pollutant from such vessel or other floating craft shall be subject to the Clean Water Act [33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.].

(f) Stable reference areas

(1) Within one year after June 28, 1980, the Secretary of State shall, in cooperation with the Administrator and as part of the international consultations pursuant to section 1428(f) of this title, negotiate with all nations that are identified in such subsection for the purpose of establishing international stable reference areas in which no mining shall take place: *Provided, however,* That this subsection shall not be construed as requiring any substantial withdrawal of deep seabed areas from deep seabed mining authorized by this chapter.

(2) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as authorizing the United States to unilaterally establish such reference area or areas nor shall the United States recognize the unilateral claim to such reference area or areas by any State.

(3) Within four years after June 28, 1980, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to Congress on the progress of establishing such stable reference areas, including the designation of appropriate zones to insure a representative and stable biota of the deep seabed.

(4) For purposes of this section “stable reference areas” shall mean an area or areas of the deep seabed to be used as a reference zone or zones for purposes of resource evaluation and environmental assessment of deep seabed mining in which no mining will occur.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §109, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 568.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Clean Water Act, referred to in subsec. (e), is act June 30, 1948, ch. 758, as amended generally by Pub. L. 92-500, §2, Oct. 18, 1972, 86 Stat. 816, also known as the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, which is classified generally to chapter 26 (§1251 et seq.) of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1251 of Title 33 and Tables.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

§ 1420. Conservation of natural resources

For the purpose of conservation of natural resources, each license and permit issued under this subchapter shall contain, as needed, terms, conditions, and restrictions which have due regard for the prevention of waste and the future opportunity for the commercial recovery of the unrecovered balance of the hard mineral resources in the area to which the license or permit applies. In establishing these terms, condi-

tions, and restrictions, the Administrator shall consider the state of the technology, the processing system utilized and the value and potential use of any waste, the environmental effects of the exploration or commercial recovery activities, economic and resource data, and the national need for hard mineral resources. As used in this chapter, the term “conservation of natural resources” is not intended to grant, imply, or create any inference of production controls or price regulation, in particular those which would affect the volume of production, prices, profits, markets, or the decision of which minerals or metals are to be recovered, except as such effects may be incidental to actions taken pursuant to this section.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §110, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 570.)

§ 1421. Prevention of interference with other uses of the high seas

Each license and permit issued under this subchapter shall include such restrictions as may be necessary and appropriate to ensure that exploration or commercial recovery activities conducted by the licensee or permittee do not unreasonably interfere with the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedoms of the high seas, as recognized under general principles of international law.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §111, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 571.)

§ 1422. Safety of life and property at sea

(a) Conditions regarding vessels

The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, in consultation with the Administrator, shall require in any license or permit issued under this subchapter, in conformity with principles of international law, that vessels documented under the laws of the United States and used in activities authorized under the license or permit comply with conditions regarding the design, construction, alteration, repair, equipment, operation, manning, and maintenance relating to vessel and crew safety and the promotion of safety of life and property at sea.

(b) Applicability of other laws

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any vessel described in subsection (a) of this section shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 51 of title 46, and to the provisions of titles 52 and 53 of the Revised Statutes and all Acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §112, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 571.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Title 52 of the Revised Statutes, referred to in subsec. (b), consisted of R.S. §§4399 to 4500, which were classified to sections 170, 214, 215, 222, 224, 224a, 226, 228, 229, 230 to 234, 239, 240, 361, 362, 364, 371 to 373, 375 to 382, 384, 385, 391, 391a, 392 to 394, 399 to 404, 405 to 416, 435 to 440, 451 to 453, 460, 461 to 463, 464, 466, 467 to 482, and 489 to 498 of former Title 46, Shipping. For complete classification of R.S. §§4399 to 4500 to the Code, see Tables. A majority of such sections of the Revised Statutes were repealed and various provisions thereof were reen-

acted in Title 46, Shipping, by Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 500. For disposition of sections of former Title 46 into revised Title 46, see Disposition Table preceding section 101 of Title 46.

Title 53 of the Revised Statutes, referred to in subsec. (b), consisted of R.S. §§ 4501 to 4612, which were classified to sections 541 to 543, 545 to 549, 561, 562, 564 to 571, 574 to 578, 591 to 597, 600, 602 to 605, 621 to 628, 641 to 643, 644, 645, 651 to 660, 661 to 669, 674 to 679, 681 to 687, 701 to 710, and 711 to 713 of former Title 46, Shipping. For complete classification of R.S. §§ 4501 to 4612 to the Code, see Tables. A majority of such sections of the Revised Statutes were repealed and various provisions thereof were reenacted in Title 46, Shipping, by Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 500. For disposition of sections of former Title 46 into revised Title 46, see Disposition Table preceding section 101 of Title 46.

CODIFICATION

In subsec. (b), “chapter 51 of title 46” substituted for “the International Voyage Load Line Act of 1973” on authority of Pub. L. 99-509, title V, § 5103(b), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1927, section 5101 of which enacted parts C and J of subtitle II of Title 46, Shipping.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

§ 1423. Records, audits, and public disclosure

(a) Records and audits

(1) Each licensee and permittee shall keep such records, consistent with standard accounting principles, as the Administrator shall by regulation prescribe. Such records shall include information which will fully disclose expenditures for exploration and commercial recovery, including processing, of hard mineral resources, and such other information as will facilitate an effective audit of such expenditures.

(2) The Administrator and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access, for purposes of audit and examination, to any books, documents, papers, and records of licensees and permittees which are necessary and directly pertinent to verify the expenditures referred to in paragraph (1).

(b) Submission of data and information

Each licensee and permittee shall be required to submit to the Administrator such data or other information as the Administrator may reasonably need for purposes of making determinations with respect to the issuance, revocation, modification, or suspension of any license or permit; compliance with the reporting requirement contained in section 1469¹ of this title; and evaluation of the exploration or commercial recovery activities conducted by the licensee or permittee.

(c) Public disclosure

Copies of any document, report, communication, or other record maintained or received by

the Administrator containing data or information required under this subchapter shall be made available to any person upon any request which (1) reasonably describes such record and (2) is made in accordance with rules adopted by the Administrator stating the time, place, fees (if any, not to exceed the direct cost of the services rendered), and procedures to be followed, except that neither the Administrator nor any other officer or employee of the United States may disclose any data or information knowingly and willingly required under this subchapter the disclosure of which is prohibited by section 1905 of title 18. Any officer or employee of the United States who discloses data or information in violation of this subsection shall be subject to the penalties set forth in section 1463(b) of this title. (Pub. L. 96-283, title I, § 113, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 571.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 1469 of this title, referred to in subsec. (b), was omitted from the Code.

§ 1424. Monitoring of activities of licensees and permittees

Each license and permit issued under this subchapter shall require the licensee or permittee—

(1) to allow the Administrator to place appropriate Federal officers or employees as observers aboard vessels used by the licensee or permittee in exploration or commercial recovery activities (A) to monitor such activities at such time, and to such extent, as the Administrator deems reasonable and necessary to assess the effectiveness of the terms, conditions, and restrictions of the license or permit, and (B) to report to the Administrator whenever such officers or employees have reason to believe there is a failure to comply with such terms, conditions, and restrictions;

(2) to cooperate with such officers and employees in the performance of monitoring functions; and

(3) to monitor the environmental effects of the exploration and commercial recovery activities in accordance with guidelines issued by the Administrator and to submit such information as the Administrator finds to be necessary and appropriate to assess environmental impacts and to develop and evaluate possible methods of mitigating adverse environmental effects.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, § 114, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 572.)

§ 1425. Relinquishment, surrender, and transfer of licenses and permits

(a) Relinquishment and surrender

Any licensee or permittee may at any time, without penalty—

(1) surrender to the Administrator a license or a permit issued to the licensee or permittee; or

(2) relinquish to the Administrator, in whole or in part, any right to conduct any exploration or commercial recovery activities authorized by the license or permit.

Any licensee or permittee who surrenders a license or permit, or relinquishes any such right,

¹ See References in Text note below.

shall remain liable with respect to all violations and penalties incurred, and damage to persons or property caused, by the licensee or permittee as a result of activities engaged in by the licensee or permittee under such license or permit.

(b) Transfer

Any license or permit, upon written request of the licensee or permittee, may be transferred by the Administrator; except that no such transfer may occur unless the proposed transferee is a United States citizen and until the Administrator determines that (1) the proposed transfer is in the public interest, and (2) the proposed transferee and the exploration or commercial recovery activities the transferee proposes to conduct meet the requirements of this chapter and regulations issued under this chapter.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §115, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 572.)

§ 1426. Public notice and hearings

(a) Required procedures

The Administrator may issue regulations to carry out this chapter, establish and significantly modify terms, conditions, and restrictions in licenses and permits issued under this subchapter, and issue or transfer licenses and permits under this subchapter, only after public notice and opportunity for comment and hearings in accordance with the following:

(1) The Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register notice of all applications for licenses and permits, all proposals to issue or transfer licenses and permits, all regulations implementing this chapter, all terms, conditions, and restrictions on licenses and permits, and all proposals to significantly modify licenses and permits. Interested persons shall be permitted to examine the materials relevant to any of these actions, and shall have at least 60 days after publication of such notice to submit written comments to the Administrator.

(2) The Administrator shall hold a public hearing in an appropriate location and may employ such additional methods as the Administrator deems appropriate to inform interested persons about each action specified in paragraph (1) and to invite their comments thereon.

(b) Adjudicatory hearing

If the Administrator determines that there exists one or more specific and material factual issues which require resolution by formal processes, at least one adjudicatory hearing shall be held in the District of Columbia in accordance with the provisions of section 554 of title 5. The record developed in any such adjudicatory hearing shall be part of the basis for the Administrator's decision to take any action referred to in subsection (a) of this section. Hearings held pursuant to this section shall be consolidated insofar as practicable with hearings held by other agencies.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §116, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 573.)

§ 1427. Civil actions

(a) Equitable relief

Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, any person may commence a civil action for equitable relief on that person's behalf in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia—

(1) against any person who is alleged to be in violation of any provision of this chapter or any condition of a license or permit issued under this subchapter; or

(2) against the Administrator when there is alleged a failure of the Administrator to perform any act or duty under this chapter which is not discretionary,

if the person bringing the action has a valid legal interest which is or may be adversely affected by such alleged violation or failure to perform. In suits brought under this subsection, the district court shall have jurisdiction, without regard to the amount in controversy or the citizenship of the parties, to enforce the provisions of this chapter, or any term, condition, or restriction of a license or permit issued under this subchapter, or to order the Administrator to perform such act or duty.

(b) Notice

No civil action may be commenced—

(1) under subsection (a)(1) of this section—

(A) prior to 60 days after the plaintiff has given notice of the alleged violation to the Administrator and to any alleged violator; or

(B) if the Administrator or the Attorney General has commenced and is diligently prosecuting a civil or criminal action with respect to the alleged violation in a court of the United States; except that in any such civil action, any person having a valid legal interest which is or may be adversely affected by the alleged violation may intervene; or

(2) under subsection (a)(2) of this section, prior to 60 days after the plaintiff has given notice of such action to the Administrator.

Notice under this subsection shall be given in such a manner as the Administrator shall prescribe by regulation.

(c) Costs and fees

The court, in issuing any final order in any action brought under subsection (a) of this section, may award costs of litigation, including reasonable attorney and expert witness fees, to any party whenever the court determines that such an award is appropriate.

(d) Relationship to other law

Nothing in this section shall restrict the rights which any person or class of persons may have under other law to seek enforcement or to seek any other relief. All vessel safety and environmental requirements of or under this chapter shall be in addition to other requirements of law.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §117, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 573.)

§ 1428. Reciprocating states**(a) Designation**

The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the heads of other appropriate departments and agencies, may designate any foreign nation as a reciprocating state if the Secretary of State finds that such foreign nation—

(1) regulates the conduct of its citizens and other persons subject to its jurisdiction engaged in exploration for, and commercial recovery of, hard mineral resources of the deep seabed in a manner compatible with that provided in this chapter and the regulations issued under this chapter, which includes adequate measures for the protection of the environment, the conservation of natural resources, and the safety of life and property at sea, and includes effective enforcement provisions;

(2) recognizes licenses and permits issued under this subchapter to the extent that such nation, under its laws, (A) prohibits any person from engaging in exploration or commercial recovery which conflicts with that authorized under any such license or permit and (B) complies with the date for issuance of licenses and the effective date for permits provided in section 1412(c)(1)(D) of this title;

(3) recognizes, under its procedures, priorities of right, consistent with those provided in this chapter and the regulations issued under this chapter, for applications for licenses for exploration or permits for commercial recovery, which applications are made either under its procedures or under this chapter; and

(4) provides an interim legal framework for exploration and commercial recovery which does not unreasonably interfere with the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedoms of the high seas, as recognized under general principles of international law.

(b) Effect of designation

No license or permit shall be issued under this subchapter permitting any exploration or commercial recovery which will conflict with any license, permit, or equivalent authorization issued by any foreign nation which is designated as a reciprocating state under subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Notification

Upon receipt of any application for a license or permit under this subchapter, the Administrator shall immediately notify all reciprocating states of such application. The notification shall include those portions of the exploration plan or recovery plan submitted with respect to the application, or a summary thereof, and any other appropriate information not required to be withheld from public disclosure by section 1423(c) of this title.

(d) Revocation of reciprocating state status

The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the heads of other appropriate departments and agencies, shall revoke the designation of a foreign nation as a reciprocating state if the Secretary of State finds

that such foreign nation no longer complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section. At the request of any holder of a license, permit, or equivalent authorization of such foreign nation, who obtained the license, permit, or equivalent authorization while such foreign nation was a reciprocating state, the Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may decide to recognize the license, permit, or equivalent authorization for purposes of subsection (b) of this section.

(e) Authorization

The President is authorized to negotiate agreements with foreign nations necessary to implement this section.

(f) International consultations

The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the heads of other appropriate departments and agencies, shall consult with foreign nations which enact, or are preparing to enact, domestic legislation establishing an interim legal framework for exploration and commercial recovery of hard mineral resources. Such consultations shall be carried out with a view to facilitating the designation of such nations as reciprocating states and, as necessary, the negotiation of agreements with foreign nations authorized by subsection (e) of this section. In addition, the Administrator shall provide such foreign nations with information on environmental impacts of exploration and commercial recovery activities, and shall provide any technical assistance requested in designing regulatory measures to protect the environment.

(Pub. L. 96-283, title I, §118, June 28, 1980, 94 Stat. 574.)

SUBCHAPTER II—TRANSITION TO INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT

§ 1441. Declaration of Congressional intent

It is the intent of Congress—

(1) that any international agreement to which the United States becomes a party should, in addition to promoting other national oceans objectives—

(A) provide assured and nondiscriminatory access, under reasonable terms and conditions, to the hard mineral resources of the deep seabed for United States citizens, and

(B) provide security of tenure by recognizing the rights of United States citizens who have undertaken exploration or commercial recovery under subchapter I of this chapter before such agreement enters into force with respect to the United States to continue their operations under terms, conditions, and restrictions which do not impose significant new economic burdens upon such citizens with respect to such operations with the effect of preventing the continuation of such operations on a viable economic basis;

(2) that the extent to which any such international agreement conforms to the provisions of paragraph (1) should be determined by the totality of the provisions of such agreement, including, but not limited to, the practical implications for the security of investments of