

commercial learner's permit (CLP) holders and commercial driver's license (CDL) holders. CLP holders and CDL holders are no longer required to submit a paper MEC to their State Driver's Licensing Agency (SDLA) (49 CFR 391.43(g)(2)(ii)). Instead, FMCSA electronically transmits examination results and medical variance information for CLP holders and CDL holders from the National Registry to the SDLAs. SDLAs post the driver's information on the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) driver motor vehicle record (49 CFR 383.71(h)(1)(ii) and (h)(3)(ii); 49 CFR 383.73(a)(7)(ii) and (b)(5)(ii)).

In addition, the provisions allowing motor carriers and drivers to rely on paper copies of the MEC for up to 15 days after the certificate was issued expired as of June 22, 2025. 49 CFR 391.23(m)(2)(iii) and (m)(3)(i)(C); 49 CFR 391.41(a)(2)(i)(A) and (a)(2)(ii); 49 CFR 391.51(b)(6)(ii).

On July 14, 2025, FMCSA granted a waiver to interstate CDL and CLP holders and to motor carriers to allow them to continue to rely on a paper copy of the MEC as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 15 days after the date the MEC was issued. On August 21, 2025, FMCSA modified the waiver to allow CDL holders, CLP holders, and motor carriers to rely on the paper copy of the MEC as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days after the date the MEC was issued. FMCSA subsequently re-issued the waiver effective October 13, 2025, and January 11, 2026.

As of the date of this notice, 49 States and the District of Columbia have implemented NRII. The State of Alaska is the only State that has not yet implemented NRII and continues to rely on the paper MEC.

Initial Request for, and Grant of, Exemption

FMCSA initially granted a six-month exemption in response to a request from the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) on April 14, 2026 (91 FR 19255). CVSA requested that FMCSA provide relief until all issues associated with NRII implementation were resolved. The exemption allowed motor carriers and drivers in all States and the District of Columbia to rely on a paper copy of the MEC as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days after the MEC was issued. The purpose of the exemption was to ensure that drivers with valid medical certification and their employers were not penalized for delays outside of their control as States implemented NRII.

Need for Renewal

As of this date, Alaska is the only remaining State that has not implemented NRII. To ensure that drivers licensed in Alaska with valid medical certification can continue to operate, FMCSA determined that the existing exemption should be renewed only for these drivers and their motor carrier employers. At this time, all other States and the District of Columbia have implemented NRII and are transmitting medical certificates electronically, in compliance with the regulations. Therefore, FMCSA determined that the exemption was not necessary for drivers licensed in compliant jurisdictions and is narrowing the scope accordingly.

IV. Grant of Provisional Renewal of Exemption

FMCSA previously determined that the exemption, subject to the terms and conditions imposed, would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to the level of safety that would be achieved absent the exemption. The exemption does not alter the requirement that a person may not operate a commercial motor vehicle unless he or she is certified by a medical examiner as physically qualified to do so and does not alter any physical qualification requirements for drivers. Further, the provisional renewal of the exemption is limited to drivers licensed in the State of Alaska.

A. Applicability of Exemption

This exemption covers CDL holders and CLP holders whose CDL or CLP was issued by the State of Alaska and their motor carrier employers for the period beginning at 12:00 a.m. on October 12, 2026 through 11:59 p.m. on October 12, 2027. This exemption:

1. Extends until October 12, 2027, the ability of a motor carrier to continue to use a copy of the MEC as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.23(m)(2)(iii) and 49 CFR 391.23(m)(3)(i)(C).

2. Extends until October 12, 2027, the ability of a driver to continue to use a copy of the MEC carried on his or her person as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.41(a)(2)(i)(A) and 49 CFR 391.41(a)(2)(ii).

3. Extends until October 12, 2027, the ability of a motor carrier to continue to use a copy of the MEC in the driver

qualification file for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.51(b)(6)(ii).

B. Terms and Conditions

1. This exemption does not apply to a driver if the driver does not have a copy of his or her current, valid, MEC on his or her person that was issued by a certified medical examiner within the prior 60 days.

2. This exemption does not apply to a motor carrier if the motor carrier does not have a copy of the driver's current, valid, MEC that was issued by a certified medical examiner within the prior 60 days.

C. Preemption

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(d), as implemented by 49 CFR 381.600, during the period this exemption is in effect, no State shall enforce any law or regulation applicable to interstate commerce that conflicts with or is inconsistent with this exemption with respect to a firm or person operating under the exemption. States may, but are not required to, adopt the same exemption with respect to operations in intrastate commerce.

V. Termination

FMCSA does not believe the motor carriers and drivers covered by this exemption will experience any deterioration of their safety record. However, the exemption will be revoked if the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted or continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of Title 49, chapter 313 or section 31136.

Derek D. Barrs,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2026–20649 Filed 10–7–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–2026–1652]

Request Notice: Use of Foreign-Built Small Passenger Vessel in United States Coastwise Trade, M/V AK–6447–AX

AGENCY: Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by MARAD, is authorized to make determinations regarding the coastwise use of foreign built; certain U.S. built; and U.S. and foreign rebuilt vessels that solely carry no more than twelve passengers for hire. MARAD has received such a determination request and is publishing this notice to solicit comments to assist with determining whether the proposed use of the vessel set forth in the request would have an adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders or U.S. coastwise trade businesses that use U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Information about the requestor's vessel, including a description of the proposed service, is in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

DATES: Submit comments on or before November 9, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD–2026–1652 by any one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search the above DOT Docket Number and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Docket Management Facility is in the West Building, Ground Floor of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Docket Management Facility location address is U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

Note: If you mail or hand-deliver your comments, we recommend that you include the DOT Docket Number, your name and a mailing address, an email address or a telephone number in the body of your document so that we can contact you if we have questions regarding your submission.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency name and specific DOT Docket Number. All comments received will be posted without change to the docket at www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided. For detailed instructions on submitting comments, or to submit comments that are confidential in nature, see the section entitled Public Participation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ye Tian, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Mail Stop 2, MAR–620, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366–5400. Email: smallvessels@dot.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 12121(b), the U.S. Coast Guard may issue a certificate of documentation with a coastwise trade endorsement for eligible, small passenger vessels authorized to carry no more than 12 passengers for hire if MARAD, after notice and an opportunity for public comment, determines the use of the small passenger vessel in the coastwise trade will not adversely affect United States vessel builders or the coastwise trade business of any person that employs vessels built in the United States in that business.¹

MARAD has received an eligibility determination request. Further details about the requester's vessel and its proposed operations may be found in the determination request posted in the DOT Docket Number listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the undue adverse effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or coastwise trade businesses in the U.S. that employ U.S.-built vessels in those businesses. Comments should refer to the vessel name, state the commenter's interest in the request, and demonstrate, with supporting documentation, the undue adverse effect on U.S. vessel builders and coastwise trade businesses.

Public Participation

How do I submit comments?

Please submit comments, including the attachments, following the instructions provided under the above heading entitled **ADDRESSES**. It may take a few hours or even days for comments to be reflected on the docket. Comments must be written in English. Provide concise comments and attach additional documents as necessary. There is no limit on the length of the attachments.

Where do I go to read public comments, and find supporting information?

The docket online is located at <https://www.regulations.gov>, keyword search the DOT Docket Number list in the **ADDRESSES** section above or visit the Docket Management Facility (see **ADDRESSES** for hours of operation). Please periodically check the Docket for new submissions and supporting material.

¹ The U.S. Coast Guard and MARAD have authority under 46 U.S.C. 12121(b) through the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, respectively.

Will my comments be made available to the public?

Yes. Your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, will be made publicly available.

May I submit comments confidentially?

You may request that MARAD treat your comments as commercially confidential by submitting them to SmallVessels@dot.gov. Include in the email subject heading “Contains Confidential Commercial Information” or “Contains CCI” and state in your submission, with specificity, the basis for any such confidential treatment highlighting the CCI portions. If possible, please provide a summary of your submission that can be made available to the public.

If MARAD receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information, procedures described in the Department's FOIA regulation at 49 CFR 7.29 will be followed. Only information that is ultimately determined to be confidential under those procedures will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

Privacy Act

Anyone can 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.). For information on DOT's compliance with the Privacy Act, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

(Authority: 46 U.S.C. 12121, 49 CFR 1.93(a))

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,
Secretary, Maritime Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–2026–1654]

Request Notice: Use of Foreign-Built Small Passenger Vessel in United States Coastwise Trade, M/V BACK OFF

AGENCY: Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by MARAD, is authorized to make