



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U.S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN JAMES M. MACDONALD

ON

H.R. 4491,

A BILL TO AMEND THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND NAVIGATION

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 JULY 1990

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

### CAPTAIN JAMES M. MACDONALD

Captain James M. MacDonald has been Division Chief of the Coast Guard Merchant Vessel Inspection and Documentation Division at Coast Guard Headquarters since 12 August 1988.

Following his graduation from the Coast Guard Academy in 1968, Captain MacDonald's early assignments included duty aboard the Polar Ice Breaker EDISTO and as Coast Guard Liaison Officer and Instructor at the Naval Damage Control Training Center at Philadelphia.

Captain MacDonald has served as Executive Officer of MIO Kobe, Japan from 1981 to 1982; as Chief, Inspection Department and Executive Officer of MSO Honolulu, Hawaii from 1982 to 1985; as Chief Commercial Vessel Safety Branch Fourteenth Coast Guard District from 1985 to 1986 and as Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Section Marianas from 1986 to 1988.

Other assignments include Assistant Marine Environmental Protection Branch Chief in the Twelfth District and Marine Inspection at Marine Inspection Office, Los Angeles-Long Beach.

In addition to his Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering from the Coast Guard Academy, Captain MacDonald holds a Master of Science Degree in Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York.

Captain MacDonald's decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, the Navy Achievement Medal and two Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendations.

Captain MacDonald is married to the former Jean L. Kehoe of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, a Connecticut College graduate. They have two sons, Jason and Greg.

GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. CHAIRMAN. I AM CAPTAIN JAMES M. MACDONALD, CHIEF OF THE COAST GUARD'S MERCHANT VESSEL INSPECTION AND DOCUMENTATION DIVISION. I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE THIS DISTINGUISHED SUBCOMMITTEE TO DISCUSS H.R. 4491, A BILL WHICH WOULD AMEND THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, H.R. 4491 SEEKS TO RECONCILE AN INCONSISTENCY THAT PRESENTLY EXISTS BETWEEN THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT AND THE INLAND NAVIGATIONAL RULES, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE INLAND RULES OF THE ROAD, REGARDING THE CATEGORY OF VESSELS WHICH SHOULD BE RADIO-EQUIPPED WHILE NAVIGATING NARROW CHANNELS. THIS LEGISLATION PROPOSES TO AMEND SECTION 4 OF THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT TO REQUIRE VESSELS OF 20 METERS OR MORE IN LENGTH TO BE EQUIPPED WITH BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONES. THE RESULTING CONSISTENCY PROVIDED BY THIS PROPOSED LEGISLATION IS IMPORTANT TO MARITIME SAFETY BECAUSE IT WILL HELP PREVENT CONFUSION AMONG THE MANY VESSELS WHICH OPERATE UNDER THE BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT AND THE INLAND NAVIGATIONAL RULES.

THE HEART OF THIS MATTER IS THAT THE INLAND NAVIGATIONAL RULES REQUIRE THAT VESSELS OF LESS THAN 20 METERS IN LENGTH NOT IMPEDE THE PASSAGE OF A VESSEL THAN CAN SAFELY NAVIGATE ONLY WITHIN A NARROW CHANNEL OR FAIRWAY (RULE 9(B)). CONVERSELY, VESSELS OF 20 METERS OR MORE IN LENGTH ARE ENTITLED TO SHARE THE AVAILABLE CHANNEL WITH OTHER VESSELS OF SIMILIAR SIZE. TO DO SO SAFELY, THESE VESSELS MUST BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY. HOWEVER,

THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT CURRENTLY HAS NO PROVISION SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING VESSELS OF 20 METERS OR MORE IN LENGTH.

THE VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE ACT DESCRIBES FOUR CLASSES OF VESSELS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONES. THE CLASS THAT MOST CLOSELY APPROXIMATES THE 20 METER REQUIREMENT OF THE INLAND RULES PROVIDES THAT "EVERY POWER-DRIVEN VESSEL OF THREE HUNDRED GROSS TONS AND UPWARD WHILE NAVIGATING" BE EQUIPPED WITH BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE EQUIPMENT. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VESSELS GREATER THAN 20 METERS IN LENGTH ARE LESS THAN THREE HUNDRED GROSS TONS, AND THUS ARE ENTITLED TO NAVIGATE IN A NARROW CHANNEL OR FAIRWAY WITHOUT ANY REQUIREMENT TO BE RADIO-EQUIPPED. H.R. 4491 WOULD REMEDY THIS SITUATION BY CHANGING THE THREE HUNDRED GROSS TON BENCHMARK TO 20 METERS IN LENGTH. THE OTHER THREE CLASSES OF VESSELS TO WHICH THE BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE ACT APPLIES REMAIN UNCHANGED.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE COAST GUARD AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION URGE YOUR SUPPORT IN ENACTING THIS PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

I WILL BE HAPPY TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU OR THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE MIGHT HAVE.