



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU ANNOUNCES USE OF AN ADDITIONAL FREQUENCY FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD'S PORTS AND WATERWAYS SAFETY SYSTEM

By letter dated May 6, 2002,<sup>1</sup> the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard) informed the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureau) that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration had approved the use of VHF Channel 88B (162.025 MHz<sup>2</sup>) in Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and related safety systems in support of the Coast Guard's Ports and Waterways Safety System (PAWSS).<sup>3</sup> Previously, the Coast Guard and Maritel, Inc., the geographic licensee for VHF Public Coast Station Areas (VPCSAs) 1-9,<sup>4</sup> notified the Bureau that they had reached an agreement regarding the selection of Channels 87 A/B (157.375 MHz/161.975 MHz) for use in the PAWSS. The Coast Guard states in its May 6, 2002 letter that it will operate AIS on Channels 87B and 88B.

The International Maritime Organization Maritime Safety Committee approved carriage requirements for shipborne AIS equipment to be phased in beginning July 1, 2002. In addition, AIS ship station equipment is expected to become available in the United States in the near future. The Commission's Rules currently do not set forth licensing, equipment certification, or frequency coordination requirements for AIS.<sup>5</sup> These matters will be addressed in a pending rulemaking

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from J. Hersey, Chief, Spectrum Management Division, United States Coast Guard, to Thomas Sugrue, Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission (dated May 6, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Channel 88B is a Federal Government frequency. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 2.106 n.G5.

<sup>3</sup> PAWSS will provide Vessel Traffic Services to facilitate the safe and efficient transit of vessel traffic to prevent collisions, groundings, and environmental damage associated with maritime accidents. *See* Amendment of the Commission's Rules Concerning Maritime Communications, *Third Report and Order and Memorandum Opinion and Order*, PR Docket No. 92-257, 13 FCC Rcd 19853, 19875 ¶ 46 (1998).

<sup>4</sup> VPCSAs 1-9 collectively encompass the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts; the Mississippi River system; and Alaska and Hawaii. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 80.373(c)(1)(ii).

<sup>5</sup> Amendment of Parts 13 and 80 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Maritime Communications, *Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making*, WT Docket No. 00-48, FCC 02-102, n.145 (rel. Apr. 9, 2002).

proceeding.<sup>6</sup> Until such time, the Bureau will consider use of shipborne AIS equipment to be authorized by existing ship station licenses, including vessels that are licensed by rule.<sup>7</sup>

For further information, please contact Ghassan Khalek, Policy and Rules Branch, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-2771, TTY (202) 418-7233, [gkhalek@fcc.gov](mailto:gkhalek@fcc.gov).

Action by the Chief, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*; see Amendment of the Commission's Rules Concerning Maritime Communications, *Fourth Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making*, PR Docket No. 92-257, 17 FCC Rcd 227, 235-36 ¶ 17 (2001).

<sup>7</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 80.13(c).