

Department of the Treasury, including functions of the Secretary of the Treasury relating thereto, to the Secretary of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 203(1), 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. For establishment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Department of Homeland Security, treated as if included in Pub. L. 107-296 as of Nov. 25, 2002, see section 211 of Title 6, as amended generally by Pub. L. 114-125, and section 802(b) of Pub. L. 114-125, set out as a note under section 211 of Title 6.

**CHAPTER 85—PILOTS**

- Sec.
- 8501. State regulation of pilots.
- 8502. Federal pilots required.
- 8503. Federal pilots authorized.

**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

Chapter 85 provides for State pilotage to be regulated by the States and only in conformity with the laws of the States. It clearly spells out the preeminence of the State's role in regulating pilots for vessels operating on the bays, rivers, harbors, and ports of the United States. However, those vessels that are required to have a Federally licensed pilot, those that operate on waters outside the territorial sea of the United States, and those that operate on waters of the Great Lakes are not subject to State pilotage laws or requirements. In essence this chapter, with minor changes, confirms the State and Federal relationship with respect to pilotage that has evolved since the founding of the Nation.

This chapter permits the continuation of Federal pilotage requirements for vessels that are not required to obtain compulsory State pilotage. It confirms the practice of allowing anyone with a Federal pilotage endorsement for the waters in which the vessel is operating to be in control of a vessel when engaged in the coastwise trade. It also confirms the practice of using Federal pilots that are often organized into groups or working organizations who offer their expertise and services to vessels that are not required to obtain compulsory State pilotage.

**Editorial Notes**

**AMENDMENTS**

1984—Pub. L. 98-557, §29(f)(3)(B), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2874, added item 8503.

**§ 8501. State regulation of pilots**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, pilots in the bays, rivers, harbors, and ports of the United States shall be regulated only in conformity with the laws of the States.

(b) The master of a vessel entering or leaving a port on waters that are a boundary between 2 States, and that is required to have a pilot under this section, may employ a pilot licensed or authorized by the laws of either of the 2 States.

(c) A State may not adopt a regulation or provision that discriminates in the rate of pilotage or half-pilotage between vessels sailing between the ports of one State and vessels sailing between the ports of different States, or against vessels because of their means of propulsion, or against public vessels of the United States.

(d) A State may not adopt a regulation or provision that requires a coastwise vessel to take a pilot licensed or authorized by the laws of a State if the vessel—

(1) is propelled by machinery and subject to inspection under part B of this subtitle; or

(2) is subject to inspection under chapter 37 of this title.

(e) Any regulation or provision violating this section is void.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 553; Pub. L. 98-557, §29(e), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2874.)

**HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES**

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
8501(a) .....	46:211
8501(b) .....	46:212
8501(c), (e) .....	46:213
8501(d) .....	46:215

Section 8501 establishes the general proposition that the States regulate pilots in the bays, rivers, harbors, and ports of the United States, unless otherwise specifically provided by law.

Subsection (a) states this general proposition and uses the word “only” for emphasis on this point. Further, except as specifically provided in law, the Committee intends that this chapter not be construed to annul or affect any regulation established by the laws of a State requiring a vessel entering or leaving a port in that State to employ a pilot licensed or authorized by the laws of that State. In at least two places in current law, this general proposition is stated in both a positive and negative manner. The Committee intends to consolidate those separate statements into one provision to avoid ambiguity and redundancy.

Subsections (b) and (c) contain provisions regarding pilotage in waters between two States.

Subsection (d) prohibits a State from requiring a State licensed pilot on certain coastwise vessels.

Subsection (e) voids any regulation or provision violating this section.

**Editorial Notes**

**AMENDMENTS**

1984—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 98-557 substituted “subtitle” for “part”.

**§ 8502. Federal pilots required**

(a) Except as provided in subsections (g) and (i) of this section, a coastwise seagoing vessel shall be under the direction and control of a pilot licensed under section 7101 of this title if the vessel is—

- (1) not sailing on register;
- (2) underway;
- (3) not beyond 3 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea of the United States is measured; and

(4)(A) propelled by machinery and subject to inspection under part B of this subtitle; or

(B) subject to inspection under chapter 37 of this title.

(b) The fees charged for pilotage by pilots required under this section may not be more than the customary or legally established rates in the States in which the pilotage is performed.

(c) A State or political subdivision of a State may not impose on a pilot licensed under this subtitle an obligation to procure a State or other license, or adopt any other regulation that will impede the pilot in the performance of the pilot's duties under the laws of the United States.

(d) A State or political subdivision of a State may not levy pilot charges on a vessel lawfully piloted by a pilot required under this section.