

material, whether or not of value, (A) from a point or place on the high seas within the Exclusive Economic Zone as defined in the Presidential Proclamation of March 10, 1983 [16 U.S.C. 1453 note], to a point or place in the United States or to another point or place on the high seas within such Exclusive Economic Zone or (B) from a point or place within the United States to a point or place on the high seas within such Exclusive Economic Zone;

“(2) had a certificate of documentation issued under section 12105 [see section 12111] of that title on October 1, 1987;

“(3) had been sold foreign or placed under a foreign registry before that certificate was issued; and

“(4) was built in the United States;

except that such certificate of documentation shall be endorsed to restrict the use of such vessel to the transportation of valueless material in the coastwise trade, and to the transportation of dredged material, whether or not of value, (i) from a point or place on the high seas within such Exclusive Economic Zone to a point or place in the United States or to another point or place on the high seas within such Exclusive Economic Zone, or (ii) from a point or place within the United States to a point or place on the high seas within such Exclusive Economic Zone.”

### § 55111. Towing

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except when towing a vessel in distress, a vessel may not do any part of any towing described in subsection (b) unless the towing vessel—

(1) is wholly owned by citizens of the United States for purposes of engaging in the coastwise trade; and

(2) has been issued a certificate of documentation with a coastwise endorsement under chapter 121 of this title or is exempt from documentation but would otherwise be eligible for such a certificate and endorsement.

(b) APPLICABLE TOWING.—Subsection (a) applies to the towing of—

(1) a vessel between ports or places in the United States to which the coastwise laws apply, either directly or via a foreign port or place;

(2) a vessel from point to point within the harbors of ports or places to which the coastwise laws apply; or

(3) a vessel transporting valueless material or dredged material, regardless of whether it has commercial value, from a point in the United States or on the high seas within the exclusive economic zone, to another point in the United States or on the high seas within the exclusive economic zone.

(c) PENALTIES.—

(1) OWNER AND MASTER.—The owner and master of a vessel towing another vessel in violation of this section are each liable for a penalty of at least \$350 but not more than \$1,100. A penalty under this paragraph constitutes a lien on the vessel. The lien is enforceable in a district court of the United States for any district in which the vessel is found. Clearance may not be granted to the vessel until the penalties have been paid.

(2) VESSEL.—In addition to the penalties under paragraph (1), the towing vessel is liable for a penalty of \$60 per ton based on the tonnage of each towed vessel.

(Pub. L. 109–304, §8(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1637.)

### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
55111 .....	46 App.:316(a), (b).	R.S. §4370; June 11, 1940, ch. 324, 54 Stat. 304; Pub. L. 99–307, §10, May 19, 1986, 100 Stat. 447; Pub. L. 100–329, §2, June 7, 1988, 102 Stat. 589; Pub. L. 104–324, title XI, §1115(b)(3), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3972.

In subsection (a), the words “or to do any part of such towing” and “other than a vessel in distress” in the source provision are made applicable to all the towing described in subsection (b) for clarity and consistency. In paragraph (1), the words “wholly owned by citizens of the United States for purposes of engaging in the coastwise trade” are substituted for “wholly owned by a person who is a citizen of the United States within the meaning of the laws respecting the documentation of vessels” for consistency in this chapter.

Subsection (a)(2) is substituted for “having in force a certificate of documentation issued under section 12106 of title 46” for consistency in this chapter and with section 12102(b) as revised by the bill.

In subsection (b)(1), the words “in the United States to which the coastwise laws apply” are substituted for “in the United States, its Territories or possessions, embraced within the coastwise laws of the United States” because of the definition of “United States” in chapter 1 of the revised title and because of section 55101 of the revised title.

In subsection (b)(3), the words “or place” are omitted as surplus. The words “as defined in the Presidential Proclamation of March 10, 1983” are omitted because “exclusive economic zone” is defined in chapter 1 of the revised title.

In subsection (c), the penalty amounts reflect the adjustment for inflation pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990 (28 U.S.C. 2461 note). See 19 C.F.R. §4.92 (2004). In paragraph (2), the words “which sum may be recovered by way of libel or suit” are omitted as surplus.

The text of 46 App. U.S.C. 316(b) is omitted as unnecessary because of the definition of “person” in section 1 of title 1.

### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

#### NONAPPLICABILITY OF PUB. L. 100–329 TO CERTAIN VESSEL

Amendment by Pub. L. 100–329 to section 316 of the former Appendix to this title, from which this section was derived, not applicable to a vessel engaged in the transportation of valueless material or valueless dredged material and owned or chartered by a corporation that had on file with Secretary of Transportation on Aug. 1, 1989, the certificate specified in section 883–1 of the former Appendix to this title (now section 12118 of this title), see section 5501(c) of Pub. L. 102–587, set out as a note under section 55110 of this title.

### § 55112. Vessel escort operations and towing assistance

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except in the case of a vessel in distress, only a vessel of the United States may perform the following escort vessel operations within the navigable waters of the United States:

(1) Operations that commence or terminate at a port or place in the United States.

(2) Operations required by United States law or regulation.

(3) Operations provided in whole or in part within or through navigation facilities owned, maintained, or operated by the United States

Government or the approaches to those facilities, other than facilities operated by the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation on the St. Lawrence River portion of the Seaway.

(b) ESCORT VESSELS.—For purposes of this section, an escort vessel is—

(1) any vessel that is assigned and dedicated to assist another vessel, whether or not tethered to that vessel, solely as a safety precaution to assist in controlling the speed or course of the assisted vessel in the event of a steering or propulsion equipment failure, or any other similar emergency circumstance, or in restricted waters where additional assistance in maneuvering the vessel is required to ensure its safe operation; and

(2) in the case of a vessel being towed under section 55111 of this title, any vessel that is assigned and dedicated to the vessel being towed in addition to any towing vessel required under that section.

(c) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAW.—This section does not affect section 55111 of this title.

(d) PENALTY.—A person violating this section is liable to the Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each day during which the violation occurs.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §8(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1638; Pub. L. 116-260, div. AA, title V, §512(c)(6)(D), Dec. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 2757.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
55112 .....	46 App.:316a.	Pub. L. 107-295, title IV, §404, Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2114.

In subsection (a), the words “(as that term is defined in section 2101 of title 46, United States Code)” are omitted because the definition of “vessel of the United States” is being moved from section 2101 to chapter 1 of the revised title and will apply title-wide.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2020—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 116-260 substituted “Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation” for “St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation”.

§ 55113. Use of foreign documented oil spill response vessels

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an oil spill response vessel documented under the laws of a foreign country may operate in waters of the United States on an emergency and temporary basis, for the purpose of recovering, transporting, and unloading in a United States port oil discharged as a result of an oil spill in or near those waters, if—

(1) an adequate number and type of oil spill response vessels documented under the laws of the United States cannot be engaged to recover oil from an oil spill in or near those waters in a timely manner, as determined by the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for a discharge or threat of a discharge of oil; and

(2) the foreign country has by its laws accorded to vessels of the United States the

same privileges accorded to vessels of the foreign country under this section.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §8(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1638.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
55113 .....	46:12101 note.	Pub. L. 104-324, title XI, §1117, Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3973.

§ 55114. Unloading fish from foreign vessels

(a) PROHIBITIONS.—Except as otherwise provided by this section or a treaty or convention to which the United States is a party, a foreign vessel may not unload, in a port of the United States—

(1) its catch of fish taken on board on the high seas or fish products processed from that catch of fish; or

(2) fish or fish products taken on board that vessel on the high seas from a vessel engaged in fishing operations or the processing of fish or fish products.

(b) REGULATIONS ON OBTAINING INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Commerce may prescribe regulations the Secretary considers necessary to obtain information on the transportation of fish products by vessels of the United States for foreign fish processing vessels to points in the United States.

(c) VIRGIN ISLANDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A foreign vessel of not more than 50 feet overall in length may unload its catch of fresh fish (whole or with the heads, viscera, or fins removed, but not frozen, otherwise processed, or further advanced) in a port of the Virgin Islands for immediate consumption in those islands. Fish unloaded under this paragraph may be sold or transferred only for immediate consumption. In the absence of satisfactory evidence that a sale or transfer to an agent, representative, or employee of a freezer or cannery is for immediate consumption, the sale or transfer is deemed not to be for immediate consumption. This paragraph does not prohibit the freezing, smoking, or other processing of fresh fish by the ultimate consumer of the fish.

(2) SEIZURE, FORFEITURE, AND PENALTY.—Fish unloaded in the Virgin Islands that are retained, sold, or transferred, except as allowed by paragraph (1), are liable to seizure by and forfeiture to the United States Government. A person retaining, selling, transferring, buying, or receiving the fish is liable to the Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 for each violation. A penalty or forfeiture under this paragraph may be compromised, modified, or remitted under section 2107(b) of this title.

(d) NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.—Subsection (a) does not apply to the Northern Mariana Islands.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §8(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1639.)