

57 and a potential maximum order of 261 vehicles.

After reviewing available electric propulsion minibuses, FTA has not identified a vehicle that meets all the requesters' specifications and FTA's Buy America rolling stock standard. Because of the apparent growing interest in vehicles of this type, as evidenced by these requests and letters of support from over 150 transit agencies across the country, and to foster competition and encourage on-shoring of vehicle manufacturing to the United States, FTA is proposing a general waiver available to any FTA funding recipient and not constrained to any particular manufacturer's offering. The proposed waiver builds on FTA's previous efforts through the Clean Bus Manufacturing Roundtable to encourage the transition to zero emission vehicles by allowing federal participation in the purchase of vehicles that provide public transportation services in areas where full-sized zero emissions buses are not used due to lower passenger counts. Further, the waiver builds on FTA's efforts to encourage domestic manufacturing on-shoring by having a limited duration and phase-in period to give manufacturers sufficient time to establish domestic sourcing and manufacturing capabilities that meet FTA's Buy America rolling stock standard in the smaller bus (aka minibus) market.

Additionally, FTA consulted the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership to conduct supplier scouting for any battery electric minibus supplier capable of meeting FTA's Buy America requirements and the requesters' specifications. Supplier scouting identified no such suppliers.

Proposed Waiver

FTA proposes issuing a general non-availability waiver of FTA's Buy America rolling stock requirements for any vehicle with all of the following characteristics.

- The vehicle is powered by a battery electric propulsion system.
- The vehicle has, or is capable of having, low-floor entry.
- The vehicle is of unibody or monocoque construction (*i.e.*, not body-on-chassis).
- The vehicle has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of less than 11,794 kg (26,001 pounds) and is designed to transport fewer than 16 seated passengers including the driver.¹

¹ The number of passengers a vehicle is designed to transport is based on the number of designated seats in the vehicle and does not include areas

- The vehicle is not required to report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration under the American Automobile Labelling Act. FTA previously issued a partial Buy America waiver for vehicles subject to AALA reporting (*Notice of Partial Buy America Waiver for Vans and Minivans*, 87 FR 64534 (Oct. 25, 2022)), and does not intend to alter the terms of that current waiver by this proposed action.

To encourage potential market entrants to build the requisite domestic supply chains and establish a final assembly facility in the United States, FTA proposes that the waiver would phase out over time. For a contract for a vehicle meeting all the above requirements awarded more than two years after the effective date of the waiver, this waiver would only apply where vehicle final assembly occurs in the United States. This waiver would expire three years after it is finalized, or upon FTA's publication of a **Federal Register** notice rescinding the waiver after determining that a fully Buy America-compliant vehicle has become available, whichever occurs first.

Impacts of the Waiver

The availability of electric minibuses will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental justice.

Beginning with a 2022 Dear Colleague Letter on Cutaway Rebuild Useful Life, FTA has acknowledged and made efforts to address supply constraints and delivery delays of body-on-chassis vehicles experienced by FTA recipients. One of the requesters for this proposed waiver reported waiting times of 24–36 months to receive delivery of body-on-chassis vehicles. This proposed waiver continues FTA's efforts to relieve delays experienced by transit operators due to limited chassis availability for transit vehicles by responding to recipients' requests for vehicles of unibody or monocoque construction. The requesters' specification for a unibody or monocoque construction and zero-emission propulsion would make a new vehicle type available for FTA recipients to provide zero-emission public transportation services on routes or in operations that are most efficiently served by minibuses due to lower passenger counts.

suitable, or even designed for, standing passengers. See 49 CFR 383.5 and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration guidance: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/one-definition-cmv-vehicle-designed-transport-16-or-more>.

Request for Comment

This notice satisfies FTA's requirement to publish any proposed Buy America waiver in the **Federal Register** and provide the public with a reasonable period of time for notice and comment. 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(3) and section 70937(b)(1) of Public Law 117–58.

FTA seeks public and industry comment from all interested parties. In particular, FTA seeks comment regarding whether the waiver should be approved, and, if so, whether it should be modified from FTA's proposal and why. Relevant information and comments will help FTA fully establish the facts surrounding the waiver requests and FTA's proposal and inform its ultimate decision on whether to grant the waiver.

Veronica Vanterpool,
Deputy Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2024–30448 Filed 12–19–24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–2024–0162]

Coastwise Endorsement Eligibility Determination for a Foreign-Built Vessel: CLAPOTIS (SAIL); Invitation for Public Comments

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to issue coastwise endorsement eligibility determinations for foreign-built vessels which will carry no more than twelve passengers for hire. A request for such a determination has been received by MARAD. By this notice, MARAD seeks comments from interested parties as to any effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. Information about the requestor's vessel, including a brief description of the proposed service, is listed below.

DATES: Submit comments on or before January 21, 2025.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD–2024–0162 by any one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search MARAD–2024–0162 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, MARAD–2024–0162, 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 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 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: Patricia Hagerty, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W23–461, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366–0903. Email: patricia.hagerty@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As described in the application, the intended service of the vessel CLAPOTIS is:

Intended Commercial Use of Vessel: Requester intends to offer passenger charters and cruises.

Geographic Region Including Base of Operations: California. Base of Operations: Marina Del Rey, California.

Vessel Length and Type: 52' Catamaran.

The complete application is available for review identified in the DOT docket as MARAD 2024–0162 at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Interested parties may comment on the effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. If MARAD determines, in accordance with 46 U.S.C. 12121 and MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388, that the employment of the vessel in the coastwise trade to carry no more than 12 passengers will have an unduly adverse effect on a U.S.-vessel builder or a business that uses U.S.-flag vessels in that business, MARAD will not issue an approval of the vessel's coastwise endorsement eligibility. Comments

should refer to the vessel name, state the commenter's interest in the application, and address the eligibility criteria given in section 388.4 of MARAD's regulations at 46 CFR part 388.

Public Participation

How do I submit comments?

Please submit your comments, including the attachments, following the instructions provided under the above heading entitled **ADDRESSES**. Be advised that it may take a few hours or even days for your comment to be reflected on the docket. In addition, your comments must be written in English. We encourage you to provide concise comments and you may 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?

Go to the docket online at <https://www.regulations.gov>, keyword search MARAD–2024–0162 or visit the Docket Management Facility (see **ADDRESSES** for hours of operation). We recommend that you periodically check the Docket for new submissions and supporting material.

Will my comments be made available to the public?

Yes. Be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, will be made publicly available.

May I submit comments confidentially?

If you wish to submit comments under a claim of confidentiality, you should submit the information you claim to be confidential commercial information by email 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 claim highlighting or denoting the CCI portions. If possible, please provide a summary of your submission that can be made available to the public.

In the event 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: 49 CFR 1.93(a), 46 U.S.C. 55103, 46 U.S.C. 12121)

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 2024–30440 Filed 12–19–24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD–2024–0159]

Coastwise Endorsement Eligibility Determination for a Foreign-Built Vessel: ZEKI (MOTOR); Invitation for Public Comments

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Transportation, as represented by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is authorized to issue coastwise endorsement eligibility determinations for foreign-built vessels which will carry no more than twelve passengers for hire. A request for such a determination has been received by MARAD. By this notice, MARAD seeks comments from interested parties as to any effect this action may have on U.S. vessel builders or businesses in the U.S. that use U.S.-flag vessels. Information about the requestor's vessel, including a brief description of the proposed service, is listed below.

DATES: Submit comments on or before January 21, 2025.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number MARAD–2024–0159 by any one of the following methods:

• *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search MARAD–2024–0159 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, MARAD–2024–0159, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.,