

Customs Announces Stepped Up Enforcement of the Jones Act



JULY 18, 2016

On July 15, 2016, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced the creation of the National Jones Act Division of Enforcement (JADE) to be located in the New Orleans Field Office. According to the announcement, the “mission of JADE will be to assist CBP and industry partners on issues concerning coastwise trade, with the goal of being a clearinghouse for all coastwise trade issues.” The announcement notes, however, that carrier ruling requests will continue to be directed to the Office of Regulations and Rulings in CBP HQ. How JADE will coordinate with or relate to that Office or to the CBP penalties functions is not spelled out in the announcement.

The announcement also indicates that JADE “will work in partnership with industry stakeholders in the enforcement of the Jones Act” and provides two contact points for “e-Allegations” and “questions or concerns regarding coastwise trade issues.”

At a March 9, 2016, hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana stated that he had worked “with CBP and our Offshore Marine Service Association” on Jones Act enforcement, which he said needed to be stepped up. CBP Deputy Commissioner Kevin McAleenan responded that CBP was committed to increased enforcement and that CBP was looking to review and update prior Jones Act rulings.

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