



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No: 260706-0163]

XRIN: 0648-XA007

Deep Seabed Mining: Notice of Receipt of Consolidated Application for Deep Seabed Mining Exploration License and Commercial Recovery Permit and Announcement of Public Comment Period and Virtual Public Hearing

AGENCY: Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of consolidated application for deep seabed mining exploration license and commercial recovery permit; request for comments; notice of virtual public hearing.

SUMMARY: NOAA has received a consolidated application for a license to conduct seabed mining exploration activities and a permit to conduct commercial recovery activities that is fully compliant with the applicable information requirements of the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act (DSHMRA or the Act) and the Act's implementing regulations. As part of the application review process, NOAA will hold one virtual public hearing on The Metal Company USA, LLC's (TMC USA) consolidated application and will accept written comments on the application submitted electronically via the instructions below.

DATES: Comments on the application must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]. The virtual public hearing is scheduled for October 13, 2026, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). Instructions for attending the virtual public hearing are provided below.

ADDRESSES: The TMC USA application is electronically available at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-1751>. You may send comments, identified by docket number, by either of the following means:

Written Comments

Submit all public written comments on TMC USA's Application via the Federal regulations.gov e-Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-1751> or go to www.regulations.gov and enter "NOAA-NOS-2026-1751" in the search bar.

Comments must be submitted by the date and electronic method described below to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NOAA. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. Comments that are not related to the application or that contain profanity, vulgarity, threats, or other inappropriate language will not be considered. To ensure full consideration by NOAA, comments must be submitted in English. Comments that are not submitted in English may not be posted to the public dockets on regulations.gov or considered by NOAA. All relevant comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or information that is otherwise sensitive or protected. NOAA will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

Virtual Public Hearing

You may submit oral comments on TMC USA's Application during the October 13, 2026 meeting.

NOAA will conduct a virtual public hearing via Adobe Connect. Each person who wants to attend the virtual public hearing must electronically register by October 9, 2026, 5 p.m. ET. Attendance at the virtual public hearing will be limited to 1,000 individuals. Any person who

registers and wants to speak at a virtual public hearing should indicate that they want to speak when they register. To register for either hearing, use the following link:

https://noaabroadcast.adobeconnect.com/e2hmvffjeiu4s/event/event_info.html. Each registered participant will receive an Adobe Connect link for the virtual public hearing.

Once the virtual public hearing starts, NOAA will describe the virtual public hearing logistics. NOAA will then start the public comment part of the virtual public hearing and will call on speakers on a first come/first served basis through the raised hand function of Adobe Connect. NOAA will then unmute the person selected to speak. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak on the TMC USA application. If a speaker does not respond when they are called on, NOAA will move to the next speaker. At the three-minute mark for each speaker, NOAA will mute that speaker. Speakers cannot allot their time to another speaker. Once all speakers have spoken or at the scheduled end of the virtual public hearing, whichever is earlier, NOAA will end the virtual public hearing. NOAA retains discretion to extend the virtual public hearing if appropriate and feasible. NOAA will record the hearing and will include transcripts of the hearing on the public docket for the TMC USA application on the regulations.gov website at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-1751>. The names provided by each speaker will also be published as part of the transcripts.

The virtual public hearing does not replace the process for submission of written comments. NOAA will not respond during the virtual hearing to oral comments or questions. To ensure full consideration by NOAA, oral comments must be in English. Comments that are not in English may not be transcribed or considered by NOAA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bryan Cole, 301-233-2998,
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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On March 19, 2026, NOAA received an amended consolidated application (“consolidated application”) from TMC USA for a license to conduct seabed mining exploration activities and a

permit to conduct commercial recovery activities in an area beyond national jurisdiction generally known as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. This consolidated application superseded a previously-filed application from TMC USA seeking only an exploration license, which NOAA previously noticed in the ***Federal Register*** on December 23, 2025, and which was referred to in that ***Federal Register*** Notice as “Application A” (90 FR 60064). This consolidated application seeks the same area in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone as the original exploration license application. TMC USA’s “Application B,” for an exploration license, which was noticed as part of the same filing, was not affected by the filing of the consolidated application (90 FR 60064).

NOAA has determined that the consolidated application is fully compliant with the applicable information requirements of the Act and its implementing regulations. Under DSHMRA, NOAA shall publish notice of all applications and, subject to applicable public disclosure limitations, interested persons are afforded the opportunity to examine the relevant application materials and to submit written and oral comments to NOAA. NOAA has determined that the TMC USA consolidated application is the relevant material for examination during the notice of application (30 U.S.C. 1426(a)(1)). This application is electronically available at the location listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. Please note that the statements made in the application do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or the views of the U.S. Government.

(Authority: 30 U.S.C. 1426(a)(1).)

Neil A. Jacobs,

*Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator,
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*