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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2026-0889]

RIN 1625-AA09

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Bay St. Louis, Bay St. Louis, MS; Back Bay of Biloxi, Biloxi, MS; Pascagoula River, Pascagoula, MS; Three Mile Creek, Mobile, AL; Chickasaw Creek, Saraland, AL.

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS

ACTION: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard proposes to change the operating procedures governing the five CSX Transportation drawbridges across Bay St. Louis, Bay St. Louis, MS; Back Bay of Biloxi, Biloxi, MS; Pascagoula River, Pascagoula, MS; Three Mile Creek, Mobile, AL; Chickasaw Creek, Saraland, AL. CSX has proposed to operate each of these bridges from a remote location within the CSX Seibert Railroad Yard located in Mobile, AL. We invite your comments on this proposed rulemaking.

DATES: Comments and related material must be received by the Coast Guard on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-**2026-0889** at https://www.regulations.gov.

See the "Public Participation and Request for Comments" portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below for instructions on submitting comments. This notice of proposed rulemaking with its plain-language, 100-word-or-less proposed rule summary will be available in this same docket.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this proposed rule, call or e-mail Douglas Blakemore, Coast Guard Heartland District Bridge Administration Branch Chief at 504.671.2127, Douglas.A.Blakemore@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSX	CSX Transportation
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	**Federal Register**
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Advance, Supplemental)
§	Section
TDR	Temporary Deviation to the Regulations
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

In 2022 CSX proposed to start operating their drawbridges in Mississippi from their train yard located in Mobile, AL. This proposal included the following bridges: CSX drawbridge across Bay St. Louis, mile 0.5, Bay St. Louis, MS; CSX drawbridge across the Back Bay of Biloxi, mile 0.4, Biloxi, MS; CSX across the Pascagoula River, mile 1.5, Pascagoula, MS. The Coast Guard began a test of these remote operations systems in 2022 and published the following dockets:

(1) For the CSX drawbridge across Bay St. Louis – docket number USCG-2022-0299; a Temporary Deviation to the Regulations (TDR) published September 7, 2022 (87 FR 54619), and a NPRM published Aug 12, 2022 (87 FR 49793), both requested comments. We received three comments on the TDR from the American Waterways Operators (AWO), an anonymous submission, and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) and two comments on the NPRM.

(2) For the CSX drawbridge across the Back Bay of Biloxi, docket number USCG-2022-0360, TDR with request for comments published September 19, 2022 (87

FR 57147). We received three comments from AWO, BMWED, and the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association (GICA).

(3) For the CSX drawbridge across the Pascagoula River, docket number USCG-2022-0298, TDR published September 7, 2022 (87 FR 54618), NPRM published August 16, 2022 (87 FR 50276), both requested comments. We received two comments from AWO and BMWED on the TDR and no comments on the NPRM.

Most of the commenters on those 2022 TDRs and NPRMs expressed safety concerns with allowing remote operations of the drawbridge. Some commenters discussed concerns with potential disruptions to vessel movement due to mechanical failures.

The Coast Guard cancelled all TDR's and NPRM's after the CSX drawbridge across the Mobile River was hit by a tow and barge on August 24, 2022. The Coast Guard investigation identified that the remote drawbridge tender had lowered the draw onto a tow and barge that was passing under the bridge. In June 2024 CSX identified the root cause of this casualty was human error. CSX has since installed human computer interfaces that would act as protective measures to prevent a CSX remote bridge operator from lowering a drawbridge onto a boat beneath this bridge. The Coast Guard confirmed that the protective measures were in place during a Coast Guard site visit in August 2024.

In October 2024 CSX again requested to remotely operate the above bridges located in Mississippi, as well as the CSX drawbridge across Three Mile Creek, mile 0.0 located in Mobile, AL and the CSX drawbridge across Chickasaw Creek, mile 0.0 located in Saraland, AL.

In June 2025 the Coast Guard denied these requests. CSX did not provide sufficient information to evaluate whether operating these drawbridges from a remote location would provide an equivalent level of safety, as related to navigation safety, as

provided by an onsite bridge tender. In September 2025 CSX appealed this decision to the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Office of Coast Guard Bridge Programs (CG-BRG). Included in the appeal, CSX provided additional information on their safety and security programs.

In December 2025 the Coast Guard reviewed this additional information and determined that it was sufficient to run a test of their remote operations systems. We approved a temporary deviation to the regulations starting June 22, 2026, and ending September 22, 2026, allowing CSX to operate these drawbridges from the Seibert train yard located in Mobile, AL. During these tests, CSX will have a bridge tender onsite at each bridge to operate the bridge if needed.

The CSX drawbridge across Bay St. Louis has a vertical clearance of 13′ in the closed to vessel position. The bridge operates according to the general opening regulation in 33 CFR 117.5—requiring the bridge to open on signal—and is used by commercial tows, barges and recreational vessels. The bridge opens for vessels about six times per day and vessels that do not need the bridge to open may pass anytime.

The CSX drawbridge across Biloxi Bay has a vertical clearance of 14’ in the closed to vessel position. The bridge operates according to the general opening regulation in 33 CFR 117.5 and is used by commercial fishing boats, some tows, barges and recreational vessels. The bridge opens for vessels about 4 times per day and vessels that do not need the bridge to open may pass anytime.

The CSX drawbridge across the Pascagoula River has a vertical clearance of 8’ in the closed to vessel position. The bridge operates according to the general opening regulation in 33 CFR 117.5 and is used by commercial tows, barges and recreational vessels. The bridge opens for vessels about 17 times per day and vessels that do not need the bridge to open may pass anytime.

The CSX drawbridge across Three Mile Creek has a vertical clearance of 3’ in the

closed to vessel position. The bridge operates according to the general opening regulation in 33 CFR 117.5 and is used by commercial tows and barges. The bridge opens for vessels about 8 times per day and vessels that do not need the bridge to open may pass anytime.

The CSX drawbridge across Chickasaw Creek has a vertical clearance of 7' in the closed to vessel position. The bridge operates according to the general opening regulation in 33 CFR 117.5 and is used by commercial tows and barges. The bridge opens for vessels about 8 times per day and vessels that do not need the bridge to open may pass anytime.

At each bridge described above, CSX has installed infrared cameras, closed circuit cameras and TVs, communication systems and information technology systems on the bridge that allow an operator from Mobile to monitor and control the bridge. They have developed operation manuals that remote operators use to control each bridge and have provided documentation that CSX meets all government cybersecurity regulations.

III. Discussion of Proposed Rule

Under this proposed rule, each of the bridges addressed in this rulemaking will be remotely operated from the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL, and will open on signal. Vessels may contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge. This proposed rule requires CSX to stop trains from entering the signal block of the bridge and place and keep the draw in the open-to-boat position when any part of the remote system fails; communications between a boat and the bridge operator fail; weather prevents the remote operator from identifying boats and vessels; safety, security and procedural systems of any kind fail; or at the direction of the Coast Guard. The draw will be allowed to open and close again when CSX provides a bridge operator at the bridge location, or the failure has been corrected. Returning the bridge to remote operations will require the approval of the Coast Guard.

IV. Regulatory Analyses

We developed this proposed rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive Orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on these statutes and Executive Orders.

A. Impact on Small Entities

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. 601–612, as amended, requires Federal agencies to consider the potential impact of regulations on small entities during rulemaking. The term "small entities" comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. The Coast Guard certifies under 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities for the following reasons. This regulatory action determination is based on the ability that vessels can still transit the bridge upon giving a signal or anytime if they can pass under the drawbridge in the closed position.

If you think that your business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction qualifies as a small entity and that this rule would have a significant economic impact on it, please submit a comment (see **ADDRESSES**) explaining why you think it qualifies and how and to what degree this rule would economically affect it.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-121), we want to assist small entities in understanding this proposed rule. If the proposed rule would affect your small business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please contact the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section. The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this proposed rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

B. Collection of Information

This proposed rule would call for no new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520.).

C. Federalism and Indian Tribal Governments

A rule has implications for federalism under Executive Order 13132 (Federalism), if it has a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. We have analyzed this proposed rule under that Order and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and preemption requirements described in Executive Order 13132.

Also, this proposed rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments) because it would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. If you believe this proposed rule has implications for federalism or Indian tribes, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

D. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531-1538) requires Federal agencies to assess the effects of their discretionary regulatory actions. In particular, the Act addresses actions that may result in the expenditure by a State, local, or tribal government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of $100,000,000 (adjusted for inflation) or more in any one year. Though this proposed rule will not result in such an expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this proposed rule elsewhere in this preamble.

E. Environment

We have analyzed this rule under Department of Homeland Security Management Directive 023-01, Rev.1, associated implementing instructions, and Environmental Planning Policy COMDTINST 5090.1 (series), which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370f). The Coast Guard has determined that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposed rule promulgates the operating regulations or procedures for drawbridges. Normally such actions are categorically excluded from further review, under paragraph L49, of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1.

Neither a Record of Environmental Consideration nor a Memorandum for the Record are required for this rule. We seek any comments or information that may lead to the discovery of a significant environmental impact from this proposed rule.

V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

Submitting comments. We encourage you to submit comments at https://www.regulations.gov. To do so, go to https://www.regulations.gov, type USCG-2026-0889 in the search box and click "Search." Next, look for this document in the **Search Results** column, and click on it. Then click on the **Comment** option. If your material cannot be submitted using https://www.regulations.gov, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate

instructions.

Viewing material in docket. To view documents mentioned in this proposed rule as being available in the docket, find the docket as described in the previous paragraph, and then select "Supporting & Related Material" in the Document Type column. Public comments will also be placed in our online docket and can be viewed by following instructions on the https://www.regulations.gov Frequently Asked Questions webpage. Also, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts through the "Subscribe" option, you will be notified when comments/updates are posted, or a final rule is published.

Personal information. We accept anonymous comments. Comments we post to *https://www.regulations.gov* will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and submissions in response to this document, see DHS's eRulemaking System of Records notice (85 FR 14226, March 11, 2020).

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 117

Bridges.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard proposes to amend 33 CFR part 117 as follows:

PART 117—DRAWBRIDGE OPERATION REGULATIONS

1. The authority citation for part 117 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 33 U.S.C. 499; 33 CFR 1.05-1; and DHS Delegation No. 00170.1. Revision No. 1.04.

2. Add § 117.108 to read as follows:

§ 117.108 Chickasaw Creek.

(a) The draw of the CSX swing bridge, mile 0.0, Mobile shall be remotely operated by a bridge tender located at the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL. The bridge shall be operated as follows.

(1) The draw will open on signal.

(2) Boats and vessels can contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge.

(3) The draw will be immediately placed and left in the open-to-boat position if any of the below situations occur.

(i) If any combination of camera failures, thermal imaging capabilities or microwave sensor failures prevents the remote bridge tender from seeing upriver, downriver or beneath the bridge.

(ii) Any communications failures prevent the bridge tender from communicating with boats.

(iii) Weather prevents the remote bridge tender from visually identifying vessels or boats signaling the draw to open.

(iv) The railroad does not meet any government or agency safety requirements.

(v) The railroad does not meet any government or agency cybersecurity requirements.

(vi) Railroad safety and security procedures or equipment to close or open the bridge fail.

(vii) Anytime the CSX bridge tender is evacuated from the train yard for any reason or cannot perform any bridge operator activities for any reason.

(b) If any of the above situations in section (a)(3), take place CSX will immediately notify the Coast Guard Mobile Command Center to report the failure and that the draw has been placed and kept in the open-to-boat position.

(1) The draw may resume onsite opening and closing when a bridge operator arrives onsite and can safely operate the drawbridge and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(2) The draw may resume operating from the remote location when the situations listed in paragraph 3 have been corrected and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(c) CSX will immediately operate the bridge using an onsite bridge operator anytime at the direction of the District Commander.

(d) CSX shall maintain the working machinery of the drawbridge in good operating condition to be able to manually operate the bridge onsite.

3. Add § 117.116 to read as follows:

§ 117.116 Three Mile Creek.

(a) The draw of the CSX swing bridge, mile 0.0, Mobile shall be remotely operated by a bridge tender located at the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL. The bridge shall be operated as follows.

(1) The draw will open on signal.

(2) Boats and vessels can contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge.

(3) The draw will be immediately placed and left in the open-to-boat position if any of the below situations occur.

(i) If any combination of camera failures, thermal imaging capabilities or microwave sensor failures prevents the remote bridge tender from seeing upriver, downriver or beneath the bridge.

(ii) Any communications failures prevent the bridge tender from communicating with boats.

(iii) Weather prevents the remote bridge tender from visually identifying vessels or boats signaling the draw to open.

(iv) The railroad does not meet any government or agency safety requirements.

(v) The railroad does not meet any government or agency cybersecurity requirements.

(vi) Railroad safety and security procedures or equipment to close or open the bridge fail.

(vii) Anytime the CSX bridge tender is evacuated from the train yard for any reason or cannot perform any bridge operator activities for any reason.

(b) If any of the above situations in paragraph (a)(3) of this section take place, CSX will immediately notify the Coast Guard Mobile Command Center to report the failure and that the draw has been placed and kept in the open-to-boat position.

(1) The draw may resume onsite opening and closing when a bridge operator arrives onsite and can safely operate the drawbridge and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(2) The draw may resume operating from the remote location when the situations listed in paragraph (a)(3) of this section have been corrected and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(c) CSX will immediately operate the bridge using an onsite bridge operator anytime at the direction of the District Commander.

(d) CSX shall maintain the working machinery of the drawbridge in good operating condition to be able to manually operate the bridge onsite.

4. In § 117.675, add paragraph (c) to read as follows:

§ 117.675 Back Bay of Biloxi.

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(c) The draw of the CSX swing bridge, mile 0.4, Biloxi shall be remotely operated by a bridge tender located at the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL. The bridge shall be operated as follows.

(1) The draw will open on signal.

(2) Boats and vessels can contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge.

(3) The draw will be immediately placed and left in the open-to-boat position if any of the below situations occur.

(i) If any combination of camera failures, thermal imaging capabilities or microwave sensor failures prevents the remote bridge tender from seeing upriver, downriver or beneath the bridge.

(ii) Any communications failures prevent the bridge tender from communicating with boats.

(iii) Weather prevents the remote bridge tender from visually identifying vessels or boats signaling the draw to open.

(iv) The railroad does not meet any government or agency safety requirements.

(v) The railroad does not meet any government or agency cybersecurity requirements.

(vi) Railroad safety and security procedures or equipment to close or open the bridge fail.

(vii) Anytime the CSX bridge tender is evacuated from the train yard for any reason or cannot perform any bridge operator activities for any reason.

(4) If any of the above situations in paragraph (c)(3) of this section take place, CSX will immediately notify the Coast Guard Mobile Command Center to report the failure and that the draw has been placed and kept in the open-to-boat position.

(1) The draw may resume onsite opening and closing when a bridge operator arrives onsite and can safely operate the drawbridge and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(2) The draw may resume operating from the remote location when the situations listed in paragraph (c)(3) of this section have been corrected and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(5) CSX will immediately operate the bridge using an onsite bridge operator anytime at the direction of the District Commander.

(6) CSX shall maintain the working machinery of the drawbridge in good operating condition to be able to manually operate the bridge onsite.

5. Add § 117.677 to read as follows:

§ 117.677 Bay St. Louis.

(a) The draw of the CSX swing bridge, mile 0.5, Bay St. Louis shall be remotely operated by a bridge tender located at the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL. The bridge shall be operated as follows.

(1) The draw will open on signal.

(2) Boats and vessels can contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge.

(3) The draw will be immediately placed and left in the open-to-boat position if any of the below situations occur.

(i) If any combination of camera failures, thermal imaging capabilities or microwave sensor failures prevents the remote bridge tender from seeing upriver, downriver or beneath the bridge.

(ii) Any communications failures prevent the bridge tender from communicating with boats.

(iii) Weather prevents the remote bridge tender from visually identifying vessels or boats signaling the draw to open.

(iv) The railroad does not meet any government or agency safety requirements.

(v) The railroad does not meet any government or agency cybersecurity requirements.

(vi) Railroad safety and security procedures or equipment to close or open the bridge fail.

(vii) Anytime the CSX bridge tender is evacuated from the train yard for any reason or cannot perform any bridge operator activities for any reason.

(b) If any of the above situations in paragraph (a)(3) of this section take place, CSX will immediately notify the Coast Guard Mobile Command Center to report the failure and that the draw has been placed and kept in the open-to-boat position.

(1) The draw may resume onsite opening and closing when a bridge operator arrives onsite and can safely operate the drawbridge and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(2) The draw may resume operating from the remote location when the situations listed in paragraph (a)(3) of this section have been corrected and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(c) CSX will immediately operate the bridge using an onsite bridge operator anytime at the direction of the District Commander.

(d) CSX shall maintain the working machinery of the drawbridge in good operating condition to be able to manually operate the bridge onsite.

6. Add § 117.682 to read as follows:

§ 117.682 Pascagoula River.

(a) The draw of the CSX swing bridge, mile 1.5, Pascagoula shall be remotely operated by a bridge tender located at the CSX train yard in Mobile, AL. The bridge shall be operated as follows.

(1) The draw will open on signal.

(2) Boats and vessels can contact the remote bridge tender at VHF-FM channel 13 or by the telephone number posted on the bridge.

(3) The draw will be immediately placed and left in the open-to-boat position if any of the below situations occur.

(i) If any combination of camera failures, thermal imaging capabilities or microwave sensor failures prevents the remote bridge tender from seeing upriver, downriver or beneath the bridge.

(ii) Any communications failures prevent the bridge tender from communicating with boats.

(iii) Weather prevents the remote bridge tender from visually identifying vessels or boats signaling the draw to open.

(iv) The railroad does not meet any government or agency safety requirements.

(v) The railroad does not meet any government or agency cybersecurity requirements.

(vi) Railroad safety and security procedures or equipment to close or open the bridge fail.

(vii) Anytime the CSX bridge tender is evacuated from the train yard for any reason or cannot perform any bridge operator activities for any reason.

(b) If any of the above situations in paragraph (a)(3) of this section take place, CSX will immediately notify the Coast Guard Mobile Command Center to report the failure and that the draw has been placed and kept in the open-to-boat position.

(1) The draw may resume onsite opening and closing when a bridge operator arrives onsite and can safely operate the drawbridge and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(2) The draw may resume operating from the remote location when the situations listed in paragraph (a)(3) of this sectin have been corrected and CSX notifies and receives approval from the Coast Guard.

(c) CSX will immediately operate the bridge using an onsite bridge operator anytime at the direction of the District Commander.

(d) CSX shall maintain the working machinery of the drawbridge in good operating condition to be able to manually operate the bridge onsite.

W. E. Watson,
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard,
Commander, Coast Guard Heartland District.
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