

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROPOSED CHANGES TO JONES ACT ALREADY IMPACTING SEAFARERS

The impact of proposed changes to the Jones Act and the use of foreign flagged vessels in the US offshore sector is already being felt by seafarers according to international shipping recruitment agency Faststream, with companies rushing to replace their non-US crews.

Should the proposals by the US Customs and Borders Protection (CBP) first issued in July 2009 be implemented, they would radically change the interpretations of rules for vessels transporting specialised equipment used by the offshore oil and gas industry and revoke foreign flag exemptions to the Jones Act including pipe and cable-laying, diving support work.

“Some of our offshore service companies that we work with are already making moves to man their vessels with US crews in anticipation of the proposed changes,” said Fort Lauderdale based Craig Johnson, President of Faststream’s US operations.

“Foreign crews are being shifted away from the US and replaced with American citizens. We think that around 70 vessels could be affected by these proposals, but there still remains a good deal of uncertainty as to how far these proposals will go. We haven’t as yet seen a jump in salary expectations from crews with salaries remaining relatively stable thus far.”

He added:

“There are more than enough qualified US seafarers available to man these vessels should the proposals become a reality. Whilst there is a limited pool of qualified personnel for this sort of specialist work, we have around 4000 US mariners on our books and can crew up these ships with ease.”

The deadline for submissions to the CBP proposals passed on 17 August and a decision is expected soon.

ENDS

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Notes to editors

A copy of the CBP's proposals can be found at

http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/trade/legal/bulletins_decisions/bulletins_2009/vol43_07172009_no28/43genno28.ctt/43genno28.pdf

About Faststream

Faststream is an international recruiter which specialises in the shipping, marine and offshore industries. Headquartered in Southampton (UK), the company has offices in Oslo, Singapore, Houston, Massachusetts and Fort Lauderdale.

The company was founded in 1999 and has enjoyed rapid year on year growth.

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