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03/05/2000

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
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To: USDOT Docket Facility No. OST 99-6578-35
To: Senator Patty Murray
To: Representative Jim Mc Dermott

Re: random Drug testing

I am an active Merchant Sailor and read these notices, that apparently, drug testing incidence is to be increased and the tolerance level is to be decreased. We just had a random drug test pulled on us in Los Angeles, on the MV Mahimahi, on Feb 21, 2000.

Notice below, the Coast Guard says 1.68% are failing. I wonder how many of those are from marijuana, which can be detectible for weeks after smoking it. I am not an expert in these matters, but it seems to me, 1.68% is pretty LOW. One in 60. I think the need for drug-testing is declining.

I wonder if all this increased drug testing is actually worth it? How much does each test cost? Is America safer for it? I don't pay for these tests - the taxpayers do. Are they getting a good value for thier tax money? Or is this just a case of empire building? War-on- Drugs pork-barrelling?

Having to submit to random drug tests is degrading and makes us all into suspects.

Sincerely,
Larry Muse



From **MMP** Wheelhouse Weekly (Master, Mates and Pilot Union)
VOLUME 4. . NUMBER 2. . January 14, 2000

US Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater is proposing requirements for strengthening the transportation sector drug and alcohol testing program to prevent affected transportation workers from circumventing the testing process. The proposal is part of a rulemaking update to drug and alcohol testing regulations first issued 10 years ago.

if it becomes final, the proposed rulemaking will affect an estimated 8.3 million transportation workers across all sectors of the U.S. transportation industry

The proposal would change how laboratories and medical review officers (**MRO**) handle adulterated and substituted specimens. According to the Notice, there has been an increase in the number of specimens submitted by workers in all transportation modes which are adulterated or substituted in attempts to circumvent the testing process,

DOT has proposed that laboratories test all specimens for adulterants and for attempts of substitution. Specimens which are found to be tampered with would be reported to the employer as a refusal to test.

DOT is proposing a process by which third parties are held accountable for providing appropriate service in support of the employers' drug and alcohol programs.

The department also is proposing a procedure to permit confirmed positive test results to be reported by the **MRO** to all **DOT**-regulated employers for whom the employee currently works, not just to the employer who ordered the test. The **NPRM** calls for limitations on the sharing of this information and limits it to those employers for whom the **MRO** performs the review functions.

Because the revisions are extensive, **DOT** is providing a comment period of 120 days from the date of publication and is planning on holding three public listening sessions within approximately 90 days.

The **NPRM** was published in the Federal Register of Dec. 10th. Copies may be obtained from the Internet at <http://www.dot.gov/ost/dapc>; by calling the fax-on-demand phone line (1-800-225-3784) and requesting document 151; by writing to the **USDOT**, Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Room 10403, Washington, DC 20590; or by calling the Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance at 202-366-3784.

Comments on the proposal should be sent by April 7, 2000, to the **USDOT** Docket Facility, Docket No. **OST 99-6578**, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. Comments also may be submitted to the docket by Email by going to <http://dms.gov> on the Internet and clicking on "Submit". **MM&P** members submitting comments are asked to send a copy of their comments to **MM&P** HQ at the address listed below or via Email at: communications@bridgedeck.org.

{Marine Engineers Benevolent Association Union)

From MEBA Telex Times 1/7/2000, Volume 7 Number 1:

/COAST GUARD SETS 50 PERCENT DRUG TESTING RATE/

The U.S. Coast Guard has announced that a minimum random drug-testing rate of 50 percent for merchant vessel crewmembers will be maintained for calendar year 2000.

--The Coast Guard will maintain this rate of drug testing because the 1998 result showed 1.68 percent of all merchant marine drug tests showed positive, a rate which is considered to be too high to justify relaxing the testing standard.

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