

To All SIGCo COFR Members,

You may be aware that the US Government has temporarily shut down some of its administrative operations due to political disagreement regarding funding. As a result of this, operations at the US Coast Guard (“USCG”), and in particular the National Pollution Funds Centre (“NPFC”) that handles all COFR applications are severely curtailed – essentially they are closed, with one unpaid volunteer helping out with emergencies. Nothing is being processed except cancellations and revocations of COFR guaranties. However, they have requested that we continue to send all applications to them in the usual way and we are continuing to do this in anticipation that when the US Government funding issues are eventually resolved, the NPFC will address this backlog. However, while this state of affairs continues, we are unable to assist in facilitating urgent applications with our usual expediency.

In the event that a vessel is attempting to enter the US EEZ and has encountered difficulties due to its COFR record not appearing on the NPFC’s website, the NPFC have advised that they will only respond to requests from USCG personnel in the field. Therefore, we suggest that you advise your clients to contact the local port authorities at the vessel’s port of entry and advise them that a COFR has been submitted and that they should contact the NPFC to verify. We also recommend that clients contact us with the vessel’s name along with the port and date of entry. We will then send a message to the NPFC with this information along with the date that we submitted the guaranty and CG5585 application to them. In that way, they can locate the application once the USCG port officer calls them. Once the local port authorities call the NPFC, they should then be able to clear the vessel. Note, however, that because of the circumstances outlined we cannot assist in the manner described unless it is a genuine emergency relating to a vessel being denied entry to the USA.

As always, we remain at your disposal for any additional information you may require concerning this matter.

Nigel Shimmin
Vice President
SIGCo Group