



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D. C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Log M-351B

Date: February 1, 1989

In reply refer to: M-89-11

Honorable Samuel K. Skinner
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

On January 18, 1988, the fishing vessel WAYWARD WIND with six crewmembers arrived about 25 miles south of Kodiak Island, Alaska. A crewmember then notified the captain that the after deck was under water. The captain ordered the deckhand to tell the crew to don exposure suits, and the mate on watch sent a distress message to the U.S. Coast Guard. The captain attempted to pump one or more compartments, but the vessel continued to sink by the stern, and the captain recognized that the vessel could not be saved. After the crew had donned their exposure suits, they entered the water. The captain's wife took the vessel's class B emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) with her into the water. The vessel sank stern first about 1/2 hour after the crew entered the water.

Alerted by the distress message, a Coast Guard C-130 aircraft arrived at the search area, located the source of the EPIRB signal, and dropped flares to mark the location of the signal. Later, a Coast Guard helicopter found the captain's wife and the deckhand. The bodies of the remaining four crewmembers were recovered a few hours later by the fishing vessel, COUGAR. The estimated value of the WAYWARD WIND was \$500,000.¹

The Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act of 1988 requires the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to prepare and submit to the Congress a plan for the licensing of the operators of documented fishing, fish processing, and fish tender vessels. The Coast Guard expects that the plan, which must be submitted within 2 years of enactment of the act, will be the basis for future legislation for a licensing program. The Safety Board continues to believe that the licensing of captains of all fishing vessels is essential to vessel and crew safety.

The act requires the Secretary of DOT to consider the information, advice, and recommendations of the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Advisory Committee (committee) in formulating policy regarding safe operation of fishing industry

¹For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--*Sinking of the U.S. Fishing Vessel Wayward Wind in the Gulf of Alaska, Kodiak Island, Alaska, January 18, 1988* (NTSB/MAR-89/01).

vessels. The act authorizes the Coast Guard to develop regulations for safety and navigation equipment not previously required on fishing, fish processing, and fish tendering vessels. Input from the committee should enable the Coast Guard to be informed fully about fishing vessel operations and any particular needs of the fishing industry. Such information will assist the Coast Guard to develop regulations that will provide significant improvements in safety aboard fishing vessels while avoiding unnecessary impediments to the fishing industry.

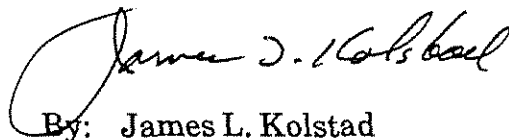
The slow pace in filling the vacancies on the committee and the lack in funding is delaying the input of information from the industry for safety regulations that are needed for safety equipment, such as crew alarms, bilge alarms, bilge pumps, firefighting equipment, and radio communication equipment. Further, the Coast Guard needs input from the industry to complete the study of safety problems on fishing industry vessels and to formulate the recommendations on the need for vessel inspection that are to be submitted to Congress before January 1, 1990. The Coast Guard also needs input to complete the plan for the licensing of operators of fishing industry vessels that is to be submitted to Congress by September 9, 1990. Thus, an early convening of the committee is needed to obtain the necessary information from industry in an orderly manner and in time to be considered fully by the Coast Guard during the development of the safety study, the recommendations regarding vessel inspection, and the licensing plan. Therefore, the Safety Board is very concerned that the delays in convening and funding the committee will seriously detract from the Coast Guard's ability to implement fully and properly the intent of the act.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the U.S. Department of Transportation:

Expedite the filling of vacancies on the 17-member Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Advisory Committee and the funding of this committee. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-89-11)

Also, as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-89-1 through -5 to the U.S. Coast Guard, M-89-6 through -8 to the Federal Communications Commission, and M-89-9 and -10 to Guest Company, Inc.

KOLSTAD, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, NALL, and DICKINSON, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad
Acting Chairman