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Integrated Marine Computing and Communications Solutions

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### USCG HF/SSB Weather Broadcasts Get Reprieve

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Last summer, the US Coast Guard proposed discontinuing weather broadcasts transmitted via HF (Single Sideband) radio. Citing aging equipment that is increasingly expensive to repair and maintain, the Coast Guard solicited public comments via an open-ended questionnaire on this matter. That comment period expired in August 2007.

Well, it turns out the Coast Guard received more than 1,100 comments on the subject, the vast majority of which were from the cruising community. Comments from "recreational" users outstripped those from "commercial" consumers by a ratio of about 2/3 to 1.

As promised, the Coast Guard produced a Business Case Analysis report, base on the comments received. Dated December 2007 and posted on the Internet recently, the report concludes that: *"The responding public collectively perceives that the USCG HF broadcasts are essential to their safety. There is no viable alternative to the USCG HF broadcasts because present alternatives are perceived by the public to be out of financial reach. Also, marine weather forecasts available through these alternative sources may not guarantee the same level of accuracy, timeliness, and/or sufficiency as provided by the USCG HF broadcasts."*

An announcement of the report's availability on the USCG MarComms website goes on to note that: *"due to responsive (SIC) received from the public and the conclusions of the business case report, the Coast Guard has decided to continue HF broadcasts of high seas weather forecasts and warnings without interruption... transmitters used for this purpose will be included among those recapitalized"*.

So, it appears that USCG HF Voice, Radiofax and SITOR text broadcasts are destined to continue. However, this report does not include any information on whether or how the CG has allocated funding to replace or upgrade their aging equipment.

You can read the full report here:

[USCG Final Report on HF/SSB Weather Broadcasts](#)