

Coast Guard to Recapitalize Aids-to-Navigation Boats



Coast Guard service members, from Aids to Navigation Team Astoria, aboard a 26-foot aids-to-navigation boat, tend a buoy in the Columbia River near Westport, Oregon, Jan. 30, 2019.

U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Trevor Lilburn

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Coast Guard, responsible for maintaining the safety of the inland waterways of the United States, is planning on building a new class of aids-to-navigation boats (ANBs), the Coast Guard commandant said.

The ANBs care for and maintain the various marine navigation aids – such as signs, buoys, markers, beacons, radar reflectors and other systems – that mark channels and obstacles to provide for safe navigation of commercial, government and recreational boating.

As of last year, the Coast Guard operated a fleet of ANBs that included three 64-foot and four 55-foot ANB, 26 49-foot stern-loading buoy-servicing boats, 90 26-foot and five 17-to-23-foot transportable ANBs, as well as numerous smaller skiffs.

“We’re going to do a detailed design and construction award in the spring of 2022 to replace our half-century working aids-to-navigation boats,” said Adm. Karl Schultz, the Coast Guard commandant, speaking 28 Sept. at a webinar of the Heritage Foundation.

Shultz said the service plans to procure about 35 new ANBs, “but I believe we will be able to shrink down to about 30 really capable boats,” although he did not specify the type or types of ANBs to be replaced.

The admiral pointed out that many of the current ANBs do not have personnel accommodations for female crew members and the

new boats would help to open more boats to female crew members.