DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. DOT–OST–2025–1326]

Protecting America's Supply Chain From Cargo Theft—Request for Information

ACTION: Request for information (RFI).

SUMMARY: Cargo theft is a growing concern for the U.S. transportation system, costing the economy billions annually. These crimes involve opportunistic ''straight thefts'' of trailers, containers, and loads at truck stops or multimodal distribution hubs and highly coordinated operations conducted by organized criminal networks. Both categories create significant economic losses, disrupt supply chains, and in some cases fund broader illicit activities such as narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting, and human smuggling. DOT seeks information from State, metropolitan, and local agencies; law enforcement; industry; stakeholders (*e.g.,* carriers, shippers, drivers, warehouse operators (including at airports), insurers); and the public to aid in the development of strategies and potential programs to reduce cargo theft, strengthen supply chain security, and create a safe operating environment for freight stakeholders and the traveling public.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before October 20, 2025. DOT will consider comments filed after this date to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Number DOT–OST–2025–1326 by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Go to *http://www.regulations.gov.* Search by using the docket number (provided above). Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the electronic docket site.
- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room PL–401, Washington, DC 20590–0001.
- *Hand Delivery:* Room PL–401 of the Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket numbers.

Note: All comments received, including any personal information, will be posted without change to the docket and is accessible via *http://www.regulations.gov.* Input submitted online via *www.regulations.gov* is not immediately posted to the site. It may take several business days before your submission is posted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Baumer, Deputy Director for Infrastructure Development, Office of Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy, at *Paul.Baumer@dot.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The safe and efficient movement of freight is critical to the Nation's economy and national security. Cargo theft undermines our economic strength and security by contributing to supply chain disruptions, driving up costs for businesses and consumers, and eroding confidence in freight transportation, including degrading trust among international trading partners. These risks occur across all modes of freight, including highways, rail, air, and maritime supply chains. Cargo theft at marine terminals and during vessel-truck-rail transfers present a particular challenge due to the high volumes and values of goods moving through U.S. ports.

Categories of incidents include:

- *Straight thefts—e.g.,* stolen trailers, pilfered containers or theft of parked trucks at truck stops, marine terminals and distribution centers.
- *Strategic theft networks—e.g.,* fraudulent carriers, staged diversions, cyber-enabled thefts, and insider collusion.

Although law enforcement agencies and industry stakeholders track incidents, reporting is fragmented and inconsistent, and national-level visibility is limited. DOT is uniquely positioned to improve coordination across modes, support data collection, and strengthen resilience by working with law enforcement, industry, industry and Federal partners. In the maritime domain, DOT's role necessarily intersects with the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), which hold primary statutory responsibilities for port and vessel security. Clear delineation of responsibilities between MARAD, USCG, and DHS is critical to avoid jurisdictional confusion in addressing cargo theft at ports and along maritime supply chains.

This RFI supports DOT's broader role in protecting supply chain resilience, reducing crime, and promoting economic strength and global competitiveness, aligning with Administration priorities.

DOT invites comment and data from stakeholders on the following:

General (All Stakeholders):

1. What are the most significant cargo theft risks facing the U.S. supply chain today (*e.g.,* opportunistic thefts, organized theft rings, insider threats, cyber-enabled diversion)?

2. How do these risks vary across different types of goods movement: truck borne freight, rail borne freight, water borne freight, air borne freight, and freight located at multimodal exchange points, including airports, marine ports, and truck-rail intermodal facilities?

3. For each of the following modes of transportation, please indicate how much of a challenge cargo theft is for shippers and carriers.

Select one rating per mode. If you do not have an opinion, select N/A. assign a 1–5 rating indicating how much cargo theft is a challenge impacting the shippers and carriers within that mode, using the following scale:

(5) Very Serious	(4) Serious	(3) Moderate	(2) Minor	(1) No Challenge	(N/A) No Opinion

Mode	5 (Very Serious)	4	3	2	1 (No Challenge)	N/A
Air	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rail	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Marine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trucking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. What barriers prevent timely detection, reporting, and response to cargo theft incidents? How can DOT reduce these barriers?

Law Enforcement/Security:

5. How can Federal, State, and local law enforcement better coordinate to address both opportunistic thefts and

multi-jurisdictional organized cargo theft cases?

6. What role should Federal intelligence functions play in identifying and mitigating theft risks across this spectrum?

DOT Operating Administrations/ Federal Agencies:

7. How should DOT Operating Administrations (FMCSA, FHWA, FRA, MARAD, FAA, and PHMSA) contribute to addressing cargo theft while avoiding duplication of FBI/DHS roles?

8. What data collection improvements (*e.g.,* reporting platforms, integrations with FMCSA inspections or CBP data) should DOT pursue to enhance cargo theft visibility?

9. Are there regulations that cause or contribute to vulnerabilities that lead to cargo theft?

Industry Stakeholders:

10. What industry best practices or technologies (*e.g.,* GPS tracking, electronic seals, AI-driven monitoring, secure parking, etc.) have proven most effective in reducing both opportunistic thefts and organized thefts?

11. How should DOT measure success in reducing cargo theft, and what performance metrics would be most valuable to track?

12. To what agency or jurisdiction does industry currently report cargo theft? What barriers prevent industry from reporting theft incidents to Federal agencies? How can DOT reduce these barriers?

13. Which commodities face the highest risks and do those risks vary contingent on whether the commodity is domestic, imported, or exported?

Forward-Looking:

14. What potential practices, technologies, or focal points for investigation could DOT initiate over the next year to test innovative approaches to cargo theft prevention, reporting, and enforcement partnerships?

Next Steps

DOT will review responses to this RFI and may use them to:

- Coordinate with law enforcement and regulatory partners to identify and close loopholes that allow carriers or transporters removed from service to re-enter operations under different names or affiliations.
- Improve cargo security risk assessment methodologies and strengthen decision support capabilities by leveraging data shared through existing Federal, State, and industry partnerships.
- Enhance interagency coordination amongst DOT, DHS, FBI, CBP, and State/local partners.
- Guide DOT in formatting an appropriate response, including the design of future initiatives in partnership with industry and law enforcement.

Public Comment

Comments may be submitted and viewed at Docket Number DOT–OST–2025–1326. Comments must be received on or before October 20, 2025 to receive full consideration by DOT. After October 20, 2025, comments will continue to be available for viewing by the public.

Signed in Washington, DC on September 16, 2025.

Cathy Gautreaux,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy.

[FR Doc. 2025–18159 Filed 9–18–25; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[Docket No. VA–2025–VACO–0002]

Instruction of the Secretary and General Policy Statement on Processing Claims Under Section 252 of the Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2022

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announces that on December 22, 2023, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs issued a Temporary Timeliness Instruction to provide temporary timeliness standards for the processing of benefits claims-related information in implementing section 252 of the Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2022 (Cleland-Dole Act), which prohibits the incurrence of VA beneficiary debt caused by overpayment attributable to VA's failure to timely process information provided by or on behalf of a VA beneficiary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael May, Regulations Analyst, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, 202–461–9700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General

Notice is given that on December 22, 2023, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs issued a Temporary Timeliness Instruction relating to the implementation of 38 U.S.C. 5302B, as established by the Cleland-Dole Act. Relevant excerpts from the Temporary Timeliness Instruction, with slight modifications for reading clarity, are provided below. A copy of the Temporary Timeliness Instruction, in its entirety, can be found as an attachment to this notice at *www.regulations.gov* under docket VA–2025–VACO–0002.

On December 29, 2022, Pub. L. 117–328, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, was signed into law. This law contains Division U, or the Cleland-Dole Act. Section 252 of Division U, title II, subtitle E, or the VA Beneficiary Debt Collection Improvement Act of 2022, added 38 U.S.C. 5302B, which prohibits the incurrence of VA beneficiary debt resulting from overpayment due to a delay by VA in processing beyond the applicable timeliness standard established by the Secretary.

VA was previously required to collect debts from beneficiaries regardless of VA information processing delays. In response to the fact that processing delays negatively impact VA beneficiaries, Congress enacted 38 U.S.C. 5302B, which establishes a prohibition against the creation of a debt arising from benefit overpayment(s) attributable to VA processing delays. This prohibition ensures that beneficiaries are not held responsible for benefit overpayment debts that accrue due to VA's failure to timely process information provided by or on behalf of a beneficiary. It also incentivizes both the timely processing of benefit claims information to avoid benefit overpayments and the timely establishment and collection of benefit overpayment debts to avoid unnecessarily large debt balances. Section 252 of the Cleland-Dole Act notes that the Secretary shall prescribe regulations to establish standards under section 5302B. VA is currently drafting those implementing regulations. Due to the time required to develop and promulgate the regulations, on December 22, 2023, the Secretary issued a Temporary Timeliness Instruction establishing temporary timeliness standards for processing benefit claims-related information provided by or on behalf of a beneficiary. This instruction is temporary in nature and will cease to be effective when VA publishes permanent timeliness standard regulations under 38 U.S.C. 5302B(a)(1)(B). VA is also implementing this instruction in a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) letter to claims processors so that VA may begin processing claims under section 5302B pending VA issuance of implementing regulations. The VBA letter provided to claims processors is found as an