



# LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mandated by  
California Oil Spill Prevention and  
Response Act of 1990

## *SPECIAL MEETING*

### MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIFTH MEETING OF THE LALB HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 27 AUGUST, 2009-Rev1

The One Hundred and Twenty Fifth Meeting of the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee was convened in the main auditorium of the Port of Los Angeles. **Chairman Strong** called the Meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. The **Executive Secretary** determined that there was a quorum present, as listed below --

FOR THE PORT OF LONG BEACH  
(Absent)

FOR THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES  
Capt. Jim Morgan

FOR THE LONG BEACH PILOT  
ORGANIZATION  
Capt. John Strong (JPS)

FOR THE TANKER OPERATORS  
Capt. Norman George  
(Crowley)

FOR THE LOS ANGELES PILOT  
ORGANIZATION  
Capt. Capt. John Betz

FOR THE MOORING MASTERS  
Capt. Baz Al Sayed  
(Chevron)

FOR TUG & BARGE OPERATORS  
Capt. Doug Houghton  
(Millennium)

FOR THE DRY CARGO CARRIERS  
Capt. Sam Jebanathan  
(APL)

FOR RECREATIONAL BOATERS  
Mr. Tom Welch

FOR ORGANIZED LABOR  
(Absent)

FOR THE CALIF. COASTAL COMM.  
(Absent)

FOR THE MARINE OIL TERMINALS  
Capt. Rob McCaughey  
(Tesoro)

FOR THE U.S. COAST GUARD  
SECTOR LALB  
Capt. Roger Laferriere  
(USCG)

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS  
(SANTA MONICA BAY)  
(Absent)

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS  
(LALB HARBOR REGION)  
Mr. Garry Brown

FOR THE CDF&G/OSPR  
Mr. Steve Edinger  
(OSPR HQ)

FOR PASSENGER FERRY  
OPERATORS  
(Absent)

FOR THE USACOE  
(Absent)

FOR THE CALIF.  
STATE LANDS COMM.  
Mr. John Brown

FOR NOAA/NOS  
Mr. Gerry Wheaton

FOR THE U.S. NAVY  
(Absent)

FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATORS  
(Absent)

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
Capt. Dick McKenna (MX-SOCAL)

ALTERNATES, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC,  
AND OTHER PARTIES (SEE ATTACHED LIST)

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**Chairman Strong** opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance, thanking all for their interest and participation in the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee. He expressed the Committee's appreciation and thanks to the Port of Los Angeles for making their facilities available for this gathering.

**The Chairman** then advised that the nature of this unscheduled meeting was to address a vessel traffic situation that had developed over the summer and involved safety implications that required review and recommendation by the Committee. He emphasized that the discussion was to be focused on the one issue, that is the substantially increased vessel traffic arriving from and departing to the west, and safety issues arising from the lack of an organized system of approach and departure for ships involved in port commerce. He emphasized that the purpose of the meeting was that alone, and that there would be no discussion of the reasons, regulations or otherwise that may have caused this situation. The approach would be to provide a statement and background of the problem, offer some possible recommendations and then open the floor for general discussion.

**Executive Secretary McKenna** was invited to present the background leading to this meeting. Since the first of July of this year, Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) has noted a significant increase in traffic approaching LALB from the west, with much the same level noted for departures. Using last year's 7% arrival/departure experience as a base line, it was observed that the arrival rate for July had increased to 17.4% and for the better part of August, 22-25%. Shortly after this increase in traffic, safety concerns were highlighted when VTS observed an outbound ship approaching a cluster of four ships inbound from the west. This incident was observed in excess of forty miles, well outside VTS' Area of Responsibility (AOR). Nonetheless, VTS operators proactively called each ship's attention to the situation and have been instructed to do so in future situations.

Because of this increased traffic density, it was apparent that more needed to be done to ensure that western traffic proceeded in a safe, orderly fashion. An ad hoc group was quickly assembled to discuss the situation and to explore what could be done. It was decided to refer the problem to HSC's Sub-Committee #1 in order to set up some interim procedures. The Sub-Committee decided on establishing informal traffic lanes as an interim measure, recognizing that that the lanes do not have the effect of (International Maritime Organization) IMO authority, but at least provided guidance that could be passed to local shipping operators. The lanes ended short of the boundary of the Navy's Point Mugu Sea Range (PMSR) in recognition of the Navy's sensitivity to traffic in this area. Additionally, it was recommended that this meeting be called to review the situation further and decide how best to proceed. Minutes of that meeting have been provided as an attachment to this meeting's agenda.

**Vice Chairman Betz**, also Chair of Sub-Committee #1, explained the rationale behind the provisional traffic lanes. The lanes were established at courses 275/095 in respect for the Santa Barbara Island Marine Sanctuary. They end at the forty-mile radial, which nearly coincides with the demarcation line for the CARB low sulfur rule. Traffic lanes were established out of language considerations in that graphics would be most easily understood for all. As a basis for discussion, he suggested several possible solutions: That the Coast Guard conduct a Port Access Route Study (PARS); that the Harbor Safety Committee institute a Best Practice or Standard of Care to address the problem; or to increase coverage of the VTS. At this point, **Chairman Strong** called for comments from represented agencies.

**Captain Laferriere** led the conversation by saying that this is a problem at many California Ports and so is being addressed as an 11<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District (D11) problem. Consequently a PARS is being conducted for all major California Ports, regardless of the Committee's recommendation. Pertinent California agencies have been notified. Interim measures can go forward during the study, which is expected to take six to twelve months for Los Angeles Long Beach. A Federal Register announcement is expected in September.

**Captain Parisi** of PMSR commented from the Navy perspective. Whereas the Navy is totally supportive of all efforts to improve air quality, this must be balanced with its own mission of National Security, in the specific instance of the Pacific Missile Sea Range to ensure that weapons when used work the first time. Although

there has been a lull in activity during the summer, the range will soon resume a very active schedule. Since weapons will not be fired when there are ships in the vicinity, the increased activity bears directly on the Range's ability to function. He reiterated the Navy's willingness to work with all parties but emphasized the importance of the range to the Nation. To a question of providing an advanced schedule, he responded that it was not so much a question of national security as it was to the flexibility of the schedule because the inherent delays associated with testing of new weapons and equipment. In response to the suggestion of confining ships to traffic corridor, he explained that any such corridor would of necessity pass through the highest concentration of testing because of the instrumentation on San Nicholas and Santa Cruz Islands and Point Mugu. Any such lane/corridor would be in the worst possible location relative to this prime testing area.

**Mr. Steve Edinger** thanked the Committee for its initiative in addressing this problem. He emphasized that this is a State Wide issue. He encouraged the Committee to look at extending the provisional lanes beyond its present range and to continue it to meet the general North/South pattern beyond the Channel Islands. He was also willing to look at extending the VTS' authority beyond its present range if the Committee felt it necessary. He supported the CARB low sulfur regulation as being good for California and its citizens. **Captain Parisi** emphasized that any effort to establish a traffic pattern into the sea range would not be acceptable to the Navy.

The discussion was opened for general comments from the audience. There was a question as to the number and types of ships using the western approach -roughly sixty five in July and thus far through 24 August sixty six of all types. In addition to the economic factor, **Capt. Laferriere** pointed out that the increased number of propulsion failures (seven since he assumed command last month) might be causing people to use this route out of caution. This will also be an item of interest in the statewide PARS study. The analysis of these propulsion failures is a top priority for the Coast Guard at the District level. He encouraged input from the companies to Sector on anything that they may feel has contributed to this situation.

**Mr. Reid Crispino** emphasized that at present this western traffic situation finds the VTS in a reacting vice controlling mode. The question arose as to how word about the lanes was being promulgated – currently by the Marine Exchange contact list for agents, shipping lines and terminal operators. Where it appears that the ship hasn't gotten the word, their company is contacted. A "Mariner's Advisory" was suggested, however it was pointed out that this was the East Coast equivalent of HSC's standards of care, or best practices, a potential approach under consideration by the Committee. It was also suggested that the word go out by handouts to the companies and through the pilots. **Captain Laferriere** also indicated that a letter from the Coast Guard might be helpful for emphasis. That will be looked into.

The CARB representative **Ms. Peggy Taricco**, asked about the possibility of the ships being encouraged to voluntarily use the Santa Barbara Channel. It was pointed out that economics seemed to be a driver in this change in patterns, and so a voluntary compliance would appear to be unlikely. Moreover, propulsion failures in the Channel could incur further expense due to repairs and time lost underway. **Chairman Strong** also indicated that such an approach is beyond the scope of the Harbor Safety Committee and was best left to the affected agencies to work out separately.

**Captain Jim Morgan** pointed out that the transition area from the normal Northern Traffic Separation Scheme is affecting recreational traffic, in that boaters are not expecting to see traffic in that area after crossing the formal lanes. He suggested that HSC write an article or provide a graphic for some of the local yachting circulars. He also mentioned in discussion that IMO approval need not be of tortuous length of time that is some times thought, since it involves solely the United States and would have a positive economic impact on the operators. In the meantime, a "recommended routing" clause on the charts is a time honored practice that could be used to advantage in this instance. A meeting will be scheduled for the week of 21 September.

At this juncture **Chairman Strong** brought up the point that the Vessel Traffic Service is dealing with the present situation, however it is time for the Harbor Safety Committee decide on what the future course of

action should be. He suggested that Sub-Committee #1 meet in September and provide a proposal for the full vote of the Committee at the October meeting.

With no further business to discuss, **Chairman Strong** adjourned the 125th Harbor Safety Committee meeting at 2:19 p.m. Respectfully submitted,

Capt. R.B McKenna  
Executive Secretary,  
LA/LB Harbor Safety Committee

LA/LB HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, August 27, 2009

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THURSDAY, August 27, 2009

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