



September 17, 2020

Rear Admiral Mark H. Buzby, Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Stranded Seafarers/Crew Change Crisis

Dear Rear Admiral Buzby,

I am writing on behalf of the Exporters Competitive Maritime Council (ECMC) to express our gratitude for MARAD's coordinated efforts in support of U.S. Merchant Mariners who are facing significant hardship as a result of the global humanitarian crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are very interested in learning about the public and private efforts underway to address this crisis, and how our member organizations might be able to assist.

As project cargo shippers and forwarders, our member organizations create the demand for the marine transportation services that move industrial products to and from the U.S., as well as in many other global trade lanes. We are learning, through this pandemic, that we have taken for granted how well the system has normally functioned, with ships readily available as and when needed to transport our cargo. Perhaps more importantly, we have taken crewing for granted. This crisis has demonstrated the significant and eminent risk to global supply chains, if we in the industry—the shippers, vessel owners/operators, and governmental entities—allow it to persist. Above all, we are alarmed at the humanitarian impact this crisis has had on seafarers and their families. None of us would want to be walking in their shoes, not knowing when we'd be able exit or enter our workplace, see our families, or even obtain the basic necessities. The situation is unacceptable, and untenable.

ECMC urges MARAD's continued efforts in support of U.S. and other nation's seafarers being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate MARAD's coordination with

other U.S. maritime agencies, as well as other U.S. government entities, including the Departments of State and Homeland Security. Further, we hope the collective voice of the U.S. government will be clearly heard at the upcoming UN General Assembly meeting later this month, wherein the crew change crisis will be discussed.

Our member organizations appreciate ECMC's long-standing relationship with MARAD. Please don't hesitate to call on us to support MARAD's efforts to end this crew change crisis for seafarers from the U.S., and all over the world.

Very truly yours,



Reda Hicks
President, ECMC

cc: Anthony Fisher – MARAD Office of Cargo and Commercial Sealift