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Foreign Trade Zone #205



January 28, 2016

California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners,

The Port of Hueneme (Port) is formally requesting the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to consider and approve regulation changes that will significantly improve the safety of vessel operations in the vicinity of the Port. The justification for this request is that the placement of commercial fishing equipment within operating areas at the Port currently poses a hazard to safe navigation.

The Port has been a popular location for the placement of fishing equipment, primarily lobster traps (pots) but also other various items. These items typically contain large amounts of line that attach the trap itself to a float. If this line becomes entangled in the propulsion or steering equipment of a vessel significant damage can occur which would require lengthy and costly repairs.

More importantly, the Port has a somewhat difficult approach and a narrow entrance channel. As a part of our routine operations, we receive ocean going vessels up to 230 meters (LOA). As these vessels enter or depart, our Harbor Safety Plan requires that they receive the assistance of two tugs to ensure safe transit. If one of these tugs should experience a propulsion or steering casualty while engaged in maneuvering a vessel into or out of the harbor, a significant safety hazard would occur since that tug would be unable to continue to provide vessel assistance. The presence of these fishing devices in the vicinity of the Port greatly increases the chance that a tug will experience a mechanical casualty, and creates the possibility of a collision, allision, or grounding, with the risk of significant damage to the vessel and surrounding structures and the possibility of environmental damage from a fuel or oil leak from the damaged vessel.

To date, the Port has tried to manage the situation by working with the local fishing community. Where that has not been fully successful, the Port has taken it upon itself to move traps into safer areas. This method has proven inadequate as the traps soon return. We have spoken with local Fish and Wildlife representatives, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, who have both advised us that they are unable to provide assistance as there is not currently an enforcement mechanism. This situation has necessitated our request for regulatory changes.



To be more specific, the Port requests that the entirety of the safety fairway for the Port, as shown on NOAA chart 18724, be placed off limits for commercial fishing and fishing devices. In this manner we can ensure the continued safety of Port operations.

Should you have any questions, or require additional technical or operational information, I can be reached at JDemers@portofhueneme.org, or 805-754-0400.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Demers".

John Demers
Chief Operations Officer

jd

CC: California Department of Fish and Wildlife