

LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #3 – Issues with the Henry Ford Draw Bridge

Meeting Minutes – May 26th, 2010
At the offices of Millennium Maritime

ATTENDEES

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Meeting called to order at the offices of Millennium Maritime at 1400.

Discussion Item 1

Issues from the tug/waterway side, raised by Doug Houghton

- The lack of communication from the bridge on whether or not the bridge is open or when it will be open
- Delays need to be made known ahead of time and not while the tugs are waiting at the bridge
- Issues with fire/rescue boats trying to pass the bridge and adding critical time
- Same issue with law enforcement/security vessels
- Spill response teams also need to pass under the bridge quickly
- Visibility can also be hazardous at times in the back channel
- There have been vessel delays due to tugs trapped on one side of the bridge and unable to pass and make it to the vessel on time
- There have also been bunker delays for the same reasons

Additional run time added to circumvent the bridge

- Can be additional time based on vessel traffic
- Tugs need to know hours before a jobs if they need to circumvent the bridge or not, in order to make it to the job on time
- This additional time is not factored into bids/contracts that are in place for tug work (Should this now be built into the price structure?)
- This additional run time adds costs of fuel and increases fuel emissions as well

Bridge Operators

- The operators do not have AIS or another program to monitor vessel traffic around the bridge
- They have no priority to regulate the vessel traffic, their priority lays in the trains
- The operators are often over tasked
- Must debate on whether the train or the vessel pass first

Ways to increase efficiency of passing through the bridge

- Overall better communication between the bridge operator and the vessels. This can even be improved in the manner that they speak to each other
- Draft a plan that mitigates hazardous operations and navigation effects of the bridge
- Operator needs to share the train schedule with the vessel operators
- Possibly add another operator to solely focus on the waterway traffic
- Tug companies and the bridge operators to both keep logs of any delays that occur
- Increase the overall waterway knowledge of the bridge operators
- Add a system of the levels of urgency that the vessel has to cross the bridge

The Port of LA owns the bridge, but the Pacific Harbor Line operates it

- Need PHL's input on how to increase efficiency of the bridge
- The bridge must be completely cleared in order for it to be raised (on a system where the train must be past a certain point)
- Have PHL give the vessel operators a copy of their bridge operator training manual. If you do not currently have one, they need to produce one and maybe have vessel operator input into it

Terminal Perspective

- They schedule their trains in and out a least a few days ahead of time
- Some terminals (Maersk, APL, Hanjin) can build their trains in their own yards and place the finished train on the tracks to transit. This is the most efficient manner for transiting the bridge
- Some terminals (YTI) build their trains on the tracks, which can make for substantial amounts of time where the bridge cannot be lifted
- Would be beneficial to have the bridge operator document which terminals are causing these delays and interruptions of service

Where do we go from here?

- Short term: Increase operational safety and efficiency. Seems to be improving as of late
- Long term: Port needs to implement new policies on prioritization
- Bridge delays effects multiple groups: Container vessels, tankers, container terminals, tug boats, air quality
- Field trips for the bridge operators on the tugs and vice versa would be very beneficial. They both need to see and understands the others operation
- Have the tug companies spell out their perfect scenario in writing so there is somewhere to start from

Discussion Item 2

Review and discuss the draft document that describes our proposed methodology to revise the Tug Escort Matrix.

- Captain John Betz distributed draft proposal to committee
- Captain John Betz reviewed draft proposal with committee and answered all questions
- Committee members agreed to submit proposal to HSC for approval.

