

DRAFT NEWS RELEASE

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State and Coast Guard Sign Pilotage Agreement for California's Ports and Harbor Areas

Sacramento — Today, Governor Pete Wilson and Vice Admiral James Card, of the United States Coast Guard, signed an innovative agreement to provide for marine pilots for ships using ports and harbors in California.

This memorandum of agreement (MOA) addresses a comprehensive state pilotage program, while maintaining a vital element of local control in each of California's unique port areas. It requires high levels of pilot qualification, training, continuing education, local oversight, and evaluation of the program, and ensures federal pilot licenses as a condition of employment as a pilot.

A State Pilotage Program, already recognized by the Coast Guard, has been in effect since 1850 in the San Francisco Bay Area. This agreement applies primarily to the remaining major ports receiving commercial cargo, not already addressed in State law.

The MOA has also been signed by the state's major port authorities in San Diego, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Port Hueneme, and Humboldt Bay. It encompasses a comprehensive State Pilotage System that enhances existing pilotage programs, and creates opportunities for local port districts to assure pilot safety in their respective harbor areas. With this MOA, California becomes the first state to implement the findings of the Marine Board, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences, in its publication "Minding the Helm." This report recommended that coastal states and states served by marine pilots create new or enhance existing pilotage programs to

increase waterway safety and reduce the risk of collision or grounding of large ships in harbor areas.

To implement these new programs, each port will develop a new, Local Pilot Advisory Committee, which will advise the Administrator for the California Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response, Mr. Pete Bontadelli, and the Coast Guard, regarding issues of local concern.

Most importantly, the MOA provides for local port authorities to provide oversight of marine pilot operations in their respective port and harbor areas. Each port authority is expected to impose local port tariffs, which will address the pilotage requirements for each harbor. In areas where the State does not currently issue State pilotage licenses, the agreement requires pilots operating in California waters to possess a current Federal Marine Pilot's License, as a condition of employment.

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