

**FMC Chairman Lidinsky's Response to Representative Cummings Question  
Regarding Export Capacity at the February 25, 2010 Meeting  
Before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation  
at the United States House of Representatives**

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Lidinsky, many U.S. exporters are complaining that there is not enough space available on vessels to carry all goods waiting for export in a timely fashion, particularly given the President's emphasis on expanding U.S. exports at a time when many vessels have been tied up to reduce capacity. What is the Commission doing to ensure that the shipping conferences are not unreasonably limiting capacity to drive up rates and what more can be done to ensure that the U.S. exporters have the containers and shipping capacity necessary to meet those needs?

MR. LIDINSKY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Committee knows, in this very severe period of economic turndown and 2009, the worst year for the maritime industry in decades, capacity has been cut back. We have stressed in our meetings with the carriers, with their talking agreements, that they must be able to serve our exports as well as imports. Beyond that, at this point we urge them to work as partners with shippers to identify where potential shipments might be coming from, so that the key will be the location of containers at the right points inland. We have no problem along the coastal areas; primarily it is the inland points; and we had discussions internally yesterday about how we can identify for the Department of Agriculture, and for other shipper groups, how we might increase export container levels.