



FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20573-0001

Phone: (202) 523-5725
Email: Secretary@FMC.gov

March 10, 2025

Mr. Michael Symonanis
Chair, National Shipper Advisory Committee

Dear Chairman Symonanis:

On behalf of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC or Commission), this letter responds to the recommendation below of the National Shipper Advisory Committee (NSAC) submitted to the Commission on January 7, 2025.

NSAC Recommendation:

First, NSAC recommends that the Commission, beginning in calendar year 2025, include detailed reporting on maritime data transparency and harmonization in its annual report to Congress, as follows:

1. The current status of maritime data elements, metrics, transmission methods, and industry efforts toward standardization.
2. Actions taken by the Commission and maritime industry stakeholders to enhance data transparency and harmonization.
3. Best practices or recommendations formulated by the FMC and the industry related to the adoption and advancement of data standards.

The reporting may cover data elements outlined in existing NSAC data recommendations from:

- Shipment Level Data Alignment – December 8, 2022;
- Container Level Data Alignment – December 8, 2022;
- Intermodal Data Alignment – December 8, 2022; and
- Consistency and Alignment of Data – May 11, 2023.

Second, NSAC recommends that, if necessary, the Commission support legislation to enact an amendment/technical correction to the Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022, 46 U.S.C. § 46106, to include maritime data transparency and harmonization in FMC's existing annual report to Congress, as follows:

(e) Report on Data Transparency and Harmonization of Cargo Movements Amongst Maritime Supply Chain Stakeholders.

1. The Federal Maritime Commission shall publish, and annually update, both on the FMC website and in its annual report to Congress, a detailed account of:
 - a. The current status of maritime data elements, metrics, transmission methods, and industry efforts toward standardization.
 - b. Actions taken by the Commission and maritime industry stakeholders to enhance data transparency and harmonization.
 - c. Best practices or recommendations formulated by the FMC and the industry related to the adoption and advancement of data standards.
2. This report will include all entities regulated by the FMC under Chapter 401 of this title and any applicable functions related to Chapter 401.

In the recommendation, NSAC cites the Maritime Transportation Data Initiative (MTDI), conducted by former Commissioner Carl W. Bentzel, for spotlighting significant challenges in maritime data transparency and harmonization and stimulating meaningful progress within the maritime industry. NSAC asserts that its recommendation for the Commission to include new reporting in its annual report will help ensure ongoing transparency and alignment between industry practices and government oversight, with the goal of fostering a competitive and efficient ocean transportation system for U.S. foreign commerce.

Commission Response:

On December 13, 2024, former Commissioner Carl W. Bentzel released a report containing his MTDI recommendations for establishing common data standards and lexicon. In his report, former Commissioner Bentzel recommended the establishment of a Maritime Transportation Data System (MTDS) that would require ocean carriers to provide real-time information on their services within transit visibility. Former Commissioner Bentzel also recommended publishing a Request for Information Notice in the Federal Register to gather additional information related to data availability, accuracy, and exchange. All information regarding former Commissioner Bentzel's MTDI project, including recordings of the meetings and his report are available at: <https://www.fmc.gov/databases-and-publications/maritime-transportation-data-initiative/>.

The Commission appreciates NSAC for its January 7, 2025, recommendations that aim to achieve a similar goal of enhancing data transparency and harmonization. Insofar as this is still an ongoing process, the Commission will consider these recommendations along with former Commissioner Bentzel's proposals. The Commission appreciates the time and effort of the NSAC in making these recommendations.

Per the requirements set forth in the legislation establishing the NSAC, this recommendation has been published on the Commission's website and will be submitted to the appropriate Congressional committees. Please direct any questions regarding this response to the NSAC Designated Federal Officer.

Sincerely,

David Eng
Secretary