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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEB SITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

ELLEN DONESKI, STAFF DIRECTOR
DAVID SCHWIETERT, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

March 14, 2013

Mr. Micky Arison
Chairman of the Board of Directors and
Chief Executive Officer
Carnival Corporation and Carnival PLC
3655 NW 87th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33178-2428

Dear Mr. Arison,

I write to express my serious concerns regarding the circumstances and events surrounding the recent *Carnival Triumph* marine casualty in the Gulf of Mexico. It is my understanding that on Sunday, February 10, 2013, as the *Triumph* was transiting Mexican waters roughly 100 nautical miles north of Merida, the ship experienced an engine room fire and subsequent loss of power that left the more than 4,000 passengers and crew onboard adrift at sea.

Passengers' accounts of what they experienced from the time the *Triumph* lost power on the morning of Sunday, February 10, to the time they disembarked in Mobile, Alabama, on the night of Thursday, February 14, can only be described as nightmarish and horrific. I have read and heard stories of toilets overflowing and raw sewage leaking onto ceilings, walls, and floors and sloshing around the ship as it listed. Passengers have reported being fed rotting food. Many onboard reportedly sought refuge in makeshift shelters on the top deck and in other common areas of the ship in order to escape the noxious stench emanating from their cabins. The total failure of the electrical, plumbing, and sanitation systems on the ship left most passengers no choice but to relieve themselves in buckets and biohazard bags, which were reportedly left throughout common areas of the ship. Nausea and illness are said to have been widespread among those unfortunate enough to be trapped onboard. At least one television news program showed heartrending images of passengers signaling their distress by lying on the top deck with their bodies positioned to spell the word "HELP."

I am deeply troubled by this incident, but I cannot say I am surprised by it. This is merely one in a long string of serious and troubling incidents involving your cruise ships. In just the past five years I am aware of 90 serious events that have occurred on your cruise ships, jeopardizing the safety and lives of those onboard, and prompting Coast Guard marine casualty investigations. These incidents include groundings, collisions, allisions, engine room and generator fires, propulsion and electrical system failures that have left ships adrift at sea, and other critical onboard system failures. Attached is a more detailed list of these incidents

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(highlighted in yellow), together with 49 marine casualties impacting the rest of your industry combined during the same time period, provided to me by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Despite the alarming number of onboard fires, major system malfunctions, and human errors that have occurred on Carnival's ships since 2008, I see no evidence that the company has undertaken any meaningful course of corrective action to improve its safety record. Indeed, just this morning it was reported in the news that your cruise ship, *Carnival Dream*, lost power and had non-functioning and overflowing toilets while dockside in St. Maarten, with thousands of people trapped onboard and not allowed to disembark.

Following the *Costa Concordia* tragedy in 2012, I conducted an oversight hearing of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to examine the adequacy of safety, security, and environmental requirements that apply to the cruise line industry, as well as the extent to which the industry complies with them. The President and CEO of your trade association, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), was among the witnesses who testified before the Committee. I was particularly surprised by her assertion that "Americans are extremely safe at sea today," and that "they are even safer in the well-protected environment of a cruise ship than they are on land." More recently, CLIA provided an opposing view to a February 28, 2013, USA Today opinion piece on your industry, asserting that the industry is one of the safest forms of transportation. Quite simply, the weight of the evidence directly contradicts these assertions.

I realize that the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), under the leadership of your regulators in the Bahamas, have launched an investigation into the cause of the fire on the *Carnival Triumph*. I look forward to learning their findings and recommendations for improving cruise ship safety. In the interim, I ask that you please provide this Committee with answers to the following questions:

1. It is rumored that the *Carnival Triumph* experienced similar mechanical and engine room problems in January of this year. Specifically, some have claimed that on a cruise in mid-January the ship had propulsion problems, and on January 28 an incident occurred that resulted in damage to the ship's propulsion system and one or more generators. Can you confirm or deny these claims?
2. It has been reported that the *Carnival Triumph* engine room fire appears to have started with a leak in an engine fuel line. When was the last time that engine was serviced, when was the last time the suspect fuel line was inspected and replaced, and how often should the engine be serviced and such fuel lines be inspected and replaced under your preventive maintenance schedule? When and where was the engine room last inspected by Coast Guard marine safety inspectors?
3. What lessons were learned as a result of the November 8, 2010 *Carnival Splendor* marine casualty, in which that ship suffered a similar engine room fire that knocked out onboard air conditioning and water supply? As a result of these lessons learned from the 2010 incident, were there any changes made to your safety management system? Were any of these lessons learned put to use aboard the *Carnival Triumph*?

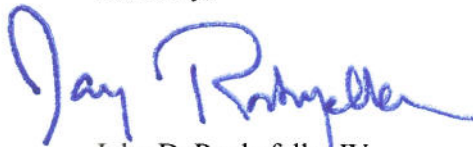
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4. The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy have indicated that the costs to them of responding to the 2010 *Carnival Splendor* incident were \$1,541,904.53 and \$1,884,376.75, respectively. More recently, the Coast Guard has indicated to me that the cost of responding to the *Carnival Triumph* incident is \$779,914.26. These costs ultimately must be borne by federal taxpayers. Given that you reportedly pay little or nothing in federal taxes, do you intend to reimburse the Coast Guard and the Navy for the cost of responding to either the *Carnival Splendor* marine casualty or the *Carnival Triumph* marine casualty?
5. Carnival regularly uses and benefits from a variety of services provided by the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal agencies. Do you think the federal taxes Carnival pays each year cover the cost of the federal services on which it relies?
6. What percent of your business do you attribute to your access to United States ports and infrastructure?

Additionally, I ask that you please provide the Committee with copies of the current Safety Management Certificates and all vessel operational plans for the *Carnival Dream*, *Carnival Triumph*, and *Carnival Splendor*, including but not limited to each vessel's Safety Management Plan, Emergency Response Plan, and Vessel Security Plan.

Please provide the requested information by April 1, 2013. If you or your business associates have any questions regarding this request, please contact my Committee counsel for these issues, Jeff Lewis, at (202) 224-4912.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman

cc: The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member

Attachment – United States Coast Guard List of Casualty Investigations Involving Cruise Ships, 2008-present (investigations highlighted in yellow occurred onboard Carnival Corporation-owned cruise ships).