

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES AND COAST GUARD

Oversight Hearing on oil spills from non-tank Vessels

December 18, 2007 – 2:30
Russell Senate Office Building Room 253

Statement of William G. Deaver, President Totem Ocean Trailer Express

Madam Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am William G. Deaver, president of Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc. I want to thank you for this opportunity to express my company's views on this matter.

Totem Ocean Trailer Express, or TOTE, is a Jones Act carrier transporting cargo between Tacoma, Washington and Anchorage, Alaska. Since 1975, we have been serving the people of Alaska by transporting the things that Alaskans eat, wear, and use. We have 170 shore based employees and provide direct and indirect jobs for an additional 525 individuals on board our vessels, as stevedores, truck drivers, warehouse operators and others. Together, we have served the Alaska trade consistently, efficiently, and without a significant oil spill for thirty-two years. We currently operate two new vessels that were built at NASSCO's shipyard in San Diego and were delivered in 2003.

Madam Chairman, TOTE believes that prevention is better than clean-up and we have designed our ships and our operating systems to prevent oil spills.

Our ships were designed to minimize the risk of oil spills such as the recent tragedy in San Francisco Bay. Specifically, TOTE's ships carry their fuel in tanks that are approximately 8 feet from the sides of the ship's outer hull. In other words, an object would have to penetrate the ship's side more than 8 feet in order to rupture the fuel tank. Moreover, the tanks themselves have double bottoms and are elevated more than ten feet above the bottom of the hull, thereby offering similar safety in the event of a grounding.

The tanks themselves are vertical, instead of being parallel to the water line as is traditionally the case. This is a crucial safety factor. The fuel tanks are approximately 20 feet wide. Hence only about a 20-foot wide band of the ship's 839-foot length is vulnerable; there are no fuel tanks behind the other 819 feet of the ship's sides. The combination of the set-back from the outer hull and the vertical orientation of the fuel tanks means that to breach the fuel tank an object would have to penetrate the hull by more than 8 feet and the penetration would have to occur within a 20-foot band, which is less than one-fortieth of the ship's length. In other words, even a collision that penetrated the hull by more than 8 feet would not damage the fuel tanks if the collision occurred on the other thirty-nine fortieths of the ship's length.

In addition, TOTE's vessels incorporate numerous other elements that reduce the risk of oil pollution and other environmental hazards, for example:

- Three separate radar systems;
- Redundant oily water separators ensure that our grey water discharge is 98% pure;
- Twin electric screws with four main and two auxiliary diesel generators;
- Twin rudders;
- Airspace stern tube sealing system that prevents lubricant leakage; and
- Self-contained ballast system to prevent the spread of invasive species through ballast discharge.

These design elements went beyond what was legally required, and they were expensive. We estimate that we spent approximately \$15 million per ship for system redundancies and environmental enhancements that were not legally required.

But TOTE's people and our operating practices are at least as important in preventing oil spills as the vessel design. First, as a Jones Act carrier, our ships are crewed by Americans. Language and communication problems are minimized when the Master, crew, and pilot speak a common language. Moreover, our crews are

highly trained, experienced and well-qualified to operate our vessels safely and in an environmentally sound manner. All of us take immense pride in TOTE's commitment to environmentally sound vessel design features and our operating safety processes. The main facilities in both Alaska and Washington State were certified ISO-14001:2004 (Environmental Management Systems) compliant this past June for all facilities and the loading and unloading of cargo and equipment to and from our vessels.

In addition, each of our ships enters and leaves Puget Sound and Cook Inlet approximately fifty times per year. Our Masters have all been with TOTE for at least 15 years. They know their crews, they know the waters and they know the pilots. The pilots know the ships, they know the Masters, and of course they know the waters. In Alaska, for example, TOTE contracts with pilots who ride the ship full time from Tacoma to Anchorage and back, thereby eliminating the risk and uncertainty of having to take on a pilot in stormy Cook Inlet in the darkness of an Alaskan winter.

We believe these measures, which we have taken voluntarily, are the best, most pro-active ways to minimize the risk of oil spills and other environmental and safety hazards in our industry. Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.