Response to Written Questions Submitted by Hon. Deb Fischer to Tom Belfiore

Question 1. Mr. Belfiore, I appreciate the multi-layered approach for port security that you outlined in your testimony.

As it relates to technology, how has that strengthened your ability to ensure security in the recent past? What are some of the challenges or risks associated with expanding security technology at ports? Does that increase, for example, the risk of cyber-attacks?

Answer: We consider security technology at all of our facilities as a force multiplier, supplementing and at times replacing the need for deployment of human assets. Technology allows for the effective, efficient, and secure movement of cargo through our ports

In recent years at our port facilities, we have greatly expanded our network of CCTV cameras. The Port Authority also created a "trusted trucker" program known as SEALINK, where we capture data and enroll trucking companies and their drivers to ensure only those having actual business at our ports may enter.

Additionally, to assist with large-scale evacuations of the port, we have deployed a port-wide siren and public address system, variable message signage for evacuation notification, and highway advisory radio to notify truckers.

The challenge to technology we find most is the cost of ownership. Beyond the initial capital outlay, it is important that funds be allocated for continued maintenance and recurrent operator training over the long term. Cyber-attacks of course are a risk to any technology system, but one that we believe can be largely mitigated through an effective cyber defense program. The heavy reliance of the maritime industry on electronic data transmission systems dictates the need for strong and effective cybersecurity.

Question 2. Many have advocated for TWIC to serve as a one stop shop for security credentialing. What do you think of this proposal for other types of infrastructure, such as airports where the Port Authority uses the Secure Identification Display Area program?

Answer: While a singular security credential across multiple modes of transportation is seemingly attractive, we believe the TWIC program would first need to be strengthened (as noted in the DHS IG's report) and reconciled with the SIDA program before it serves as a replacement to SIDA. There are several significant differences between the TWIC program and the SIDA program that would need to be addressed. For example, CFR 1542 governing airport credentials has a more extensive list of disqualifying crimes. Further, the airport credential lookback period for offenses is 10 years while TWIC appears to be 7 years.

Most importantly, the granting of a SIDA credential takes place on-airport by Port Authority security staff with the analysis of identification documents and criminal history records checks performed by the same staff. The level of scrutiny afforded each applicant we believe is superior to that which would be provided at a federal TWIC office.

Question 3. What are your thoughts on the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) August 2016 final rule that will require high-risk category facilities and a vessel to incorporate an electronic TWIC validation process, which includes a biometric check for high-risk category facilities and a vessel, prior to entry into a secured area?

Answer: We support the USCG effort to require an electronic TWIC validation process and biometric check for entry into the nation's high-risk category facilities. We are pleased that the USCG followed a risk-based model in assessing the need for these enhancements rather than a "one size fits all" approach.

Question 4. The August 2016 TWIC reader rule also states that, while not required, a maritime operator can utilize electronic TWIC inspection on a voluntary basis if they feel that this provides an additional level of security protection - and many have chosen to incorporate TWIC electronic readers into their USCG facility security plans. Are you seeing the biometric check being utilized beyond the category facilities that will be subject to USCG Final Rule?

Answer: The areas of our port facilities for which the Port Authority has direct security responsibility do not fall into the high-risk category. Nevertheless, we are evaluating the prospect of procuring handheld TWIC biometric readers (similar to those already in use at our airports) for randomized use in our areas and at times where we may assume an elevated security posture.