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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

February 14, 2013

Admiral Robert J. Papp Jr.
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second St. SW
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Papp,

I write to share with you my deep concern regarding the currently unfolding incident involving the large passenger vessel *Carnival Triumph*. It is my understanding that on Sunday, February 10, 2013, as the *Triumph* was transiting Mexican waters roughly 100 to 150 nautical miles north of Merida, the vessel experienced an engine room fire and subsequent loss of power which has left more than 4,000 passengers and crew members adrift in the Gulf of Mexico. I have been horrified to read and hear the many accounts of unbearable living conditions aboard the ship, including lack of food and water, nonfunctioning and overflowing toilets in the ship's cabins, exposure of passengers and crew to raw sewage, an intolerable ship-wide stench of human waste, and blazing heat that has caused many passengers to seek refuge in makeshift shelters on the top deck.

This unfortunate situation is just the latest example in a long string of serious and troubling incidents involving cruise ships. As you are aware, last March in the wake of the *Costa Concordia* grounding off the coast of Giglio, Italy, I conducted a Commerce Committee oversight hearing to examine deficiencies in the cruise line industry's compliance with federal safety, security, and environmental standards, and to better understand the Coast Guard's role in conducting safety inspections and responding to marine incidents that occur aboard cruise ships. At that hearing, a clear pattern emerged with respect to how the cruise line industry conducts itself. As I remarked then, they seem to have two lives: one is at port, where the Coast Guard can monitor their operations; the other is at sea where, it appears, once they are beyond three nautical miles from shore the world is theirs. The *Carnival Triumph* incident only serves to further validate this view.

The incident also serves as a stark reminder of the importance of vigorous inspection and enforcement of cruise ship safety, security, and environmental requirements by the Coast Guard, in order to protect the lives of those onboard. I understand that the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board have already launched an investigation into the cause of the engine room fire that occurred onboard the *Carnival Triumph*. I look forward to the findings of this

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investigation and expect to be fully briefed as soon as the Coast Guard is able to do so. In the interim, I ask that the Coast Guard provide this Committee with the following information:

1. How much do you anticipate the Coast Guard will spend in resources (including but not limited to a dollar amount and labor hours), to respond to and investigate the *Carnival Triumph* marine casualty?
2. How much has the Coast Guard spent in resources (including but not limited to a dollar amount and labor hours) to-date, to respond to and investigate the November 8, 2010, *Carnival Splendor* marine casualty, in which that ship suffered a similar engine room fire in Mexican waters that knocked out onboard air conditioning and water supply, and was subsequently towed under Coast Guard escort to port in San Diego, California?
3. When can we expect to receive a copy of the Coast Guard's final report on the *Carnival Splendor* marine casualty investigation?
4. Please provide a detailed list of the number of large passenger vessel marine casualty investigations the Coast Guard has conducted or is conducting in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Please include vessel owners, operators, and names in this list.
5. Can and will the Coast Guard seek to be reimbursed by Carnival Corporation for the cost of responding to either the *Carnival Splendor* marine casualty or the *Carnival Triumph* marine casualty?

If you or your staff has 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