

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2018

Dear Admiral Schultz,

I write to you today concerning Great Lakes Pilotage and the specific issues facing Midwest Terminal in the Port of Toledo. The Port of Toledo is a critical economic resource for Northwest Ohio, and an important point for the shipment of goods throughout the Midwest as the largest cargo port in the Great Lakes.

As you are aware, three international vessels were stranded at Midwest Terminals in May 2018 due to the refusal by registered pilots to service these vessels. I understand that Coast Guard staff assessed that throughout this incident a United States registered pilot was present, despite pilots not being present on the vessels as they refused to board citing a labor dispute.

I further understand that Coast Guard staff made a determination that a labor dispute existed. Believing that these incidents are historically short-lived, the Coast Guard did not apply the "6-Hour Rule" as outlined in USCG Commandant Instruction 16637.5 dated March 4, 1994, which allows for a temporary suspension of the pilotage requirements in the event that a registered pilot is not expected to be available within six hours.

Clearly, this situation was not short-lived and the circumstances surrounding the situation continue. The expensive and inefficient solution found to get these vessels underway has been a deterrent to other international vessels from docking at the Port of Toledo.

In briefings to my staff, the Great Lakes Pilotage staff has noted that COMDTINST 16637.5 is over twenty-years old and the office intends to update the instruction in light of developments with Great Lakes Pilotage over the intervening years and circumstances such as those affecting the Port of Toledo. I understand that this will be initially addressed with the Great Lakes Pilotage Advisory Committee, beginning with their next advisory committee meeting scheduled for September 10, 2018.

The impact of the current situation in Toledo is having a significant impact on economic development plans in Northwest Ohio. I have included a letter that outlines these concerns dated August 22, 2018, from Toledo area elected officials, business leaders, and labor union leaders, including the Northwest Ohio Building Trades Council, Laborers' International Union of North America Local 500, and Teamsters Local 20.

Given the scope of the impact of this situation and the challenges faced by the Great Lakes Pilotage office and the Advisory Committee in finding a timely solution, I urge you to engage personally with the Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy and relevant stakeholders to

help find a solution that ensures maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment, while minimizing disruptions to maritime commerce.

I look forward to working with you on this issue and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Portman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob Portman

Attachment: Toledo Community Letter, Aug 22, 2018