

TO: San Francisco Harbor Safety Committee  
FROM: Joan Lundstrom, Chair, San Francisco Harbor Safety Committee  
RE: Eighth Annual National Harbor Safety Committee Conference, April 26-28, 2006, Washington, D.C.

Some personal notes from the conference, not meant to be comprehensive of the entire conference:

- The Washington D.C. venue provided the opportunity for higher echelon administration members to appear e.g. Norman Mineta, Secretary, Department of Transportation; RADM Thomas Gilmour, Asst. Commandant for Prevention, U.S. Coast Guard; Mark Rosenker, Acting Chair, National Transportation Safety Board; Capt. Steven Barnum, NOAA Mission Goal Lead for Commerce and Transportation.
- Because of last year's hurricane disasters, there was extensive discussion about Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery: Coast Guard reliance on local agencies such as fire and police for an integrated response; communication, as in all emergencies is key, including designating who is in charge; predesignating ships and boats in the waterways before the storm to keep vessels from sinking in the channels; prioritizing of what ships move first after the storm: in New Orleans: fuel, food, people; opening of waterways: shallow draft vessels after key soundings and buoys restored, then successively deeper draft vessels.
- Marine Transportation: Predicted doubling of international trade by 2020 because of U.S. dependence on global market for imports and exports; 95% of international cargo carried by ship; 50% of U.S. grain goes down Mississippi River and its tributaries; 50% of the value of agricultural products goes through Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbors.
- Security: Concern was expressed by some maritime industry members of new extensive background checking requirements. Some ports employ high numbers of immigrants.
- Navigation Data: NOAA reported on working to integrate data collection systems for safe navigation purposes; IOOS is studying the various systems to create partnerships; PORTS is part of this data collection, but has varying degrees of sustainability (San Francisco, Delaware Bay, and New York have had problems of funds for operating and maintaining the systems; I questioned whether NOAA should expand PORTS in other harbors until an analysis is made of operations, funding, and governance issues).
- National Transportation Safety Board: Factor in the sinking of a ferry boat in upstate New York was while the number of passengers met required standards, the boat was overloaded because of the higher average weight (we're fatter); the Coast Guard (and FAA) are reviewing calculations for weight standards.