

Harbor Safety Committee

of the San Francisco Bay Region

*Mandated by the California Oil Spill
Prevention and Response Act of 1990
September 26, 2008*

Lt. Colonel Laurence Farrell
Commanding Officer
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District
1455 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103-1398

Dear Colonel Farrell:

On behalf of the Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) of the San Francisco Bay Region, it is with great pleasure to welcome you to San Francisco Bay. The Committee was impressed with your initiative to attend the September 11, 2008 HSC meeting at the Port of Oakland. Your willingness to engage with the local community so early in your assignment as District Commander is refreshing

You began your assignment here with a positive, effective and fast response by surveying Pinole Shoal when suspected shoaling had taken place – an area of great concern to the maritime community. This is a demonstration of the kind of partnership that the deep draft navigation community and the Corps should have to keep our channels open and commerce flowing.

I bring to your attention several concerns we have regarding safety of navigation that your office can help with.

1. Quarterly surveys of Pinole Shoal and Suisun Bay Channel. Quarterly surveys in this area are essential because of the heavy siltation deposited from the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems emptying into the Bay at this location. We understand that pre and post dredge surveys are conducted for construction purposes. However, as useful as these surveys are they do not fill in the gaps between post dredge surveys and the next pre dredge survey. These gaps takes place during critical winter months when runoff and river flow vary the most. The deep draft navigation community cannot afford to discover that shoaling has occurred when a ship grounds in the channel.

Harbor Safety Committee c/o Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region
Fort Mason Center, Building B, Suite 325, San Francisco, CA 94123-1380
(415) 441-7988 – hsc@sfmtx.org

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2. When planning and preparing for each dredge season the San Francisco Bar Pilots and the users of the main ship channels should be consulted in order to plan where to dredge and in what sequence.

Finally, maintaining the ship channels at the authorized depths of 35' is important for navigational safety and maintaining open commerce while keeping the cost of transportation down.

Respectfully,

Joan Lundstrom, Chair
Harbor Safety Committee of the
San Francisco Bay Region

cc: Harbor Safety Committee
Gary Toledo, Office of Sill Prevention and Response
Captain Paul Gugg, U.S.Coast Guard (Paul.M.Gugg@uscg.mil)
Captain Peter McIsaac, San.Francisco Bar Pilots (portagent@sfbarpilots.com)
Dennis Bolt, Western States Petroleum Association (dbolt@wspa.org)
Ellen Johnck, Bay Planning Coalition (staff@bayplanningcoalition.org)