



For Immediate Release

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New Queuing Process for Container Vessels Expands to the Port of Oakland Following Recent Success at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

*Innovative Process Developed by PMA, PMSA and Marine Exchange Improves Safety and
Air Quality While Dramatically Reducing Vessel Congestion*

OAKLAND, Calif. (January 10, 2022) — A new queuing system for container vessels designed to enhance safety and air quality is expanding to the Bay Area, following the success of a similar update introduced by maritime industry leaders in Southern California.

Effective today, container vessels will receive an assignment in the arrival queue based on their departure time from their last port of call, and wait outside a new Safety and Air Quality Area 50 miles off the Northern California coast until their appointed arrival time. The previous system placed container vessels into the arrival queue based on when they crossed a line 80 nautical miles from the coast.

The new process reduces emissions from vessels located near the Bay Area, and allows more space between vessels – an important safety feature during winter storms. The new procedure also enables vessels to slow steam across the Pacific, thereby reducing overall emissions throughout their journey.

First implemented in November at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the updated process has significantly reduced the vessel backlog in San Pedro Bay amid the historic supply chain congestion of recent months. The voluntary process was developed by the Pacific Maritime Association, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association and Marine Exchange of Southern California.

“The resounding success of the new container vessel queuing system in Southern California has set the stage for this expansion to the Bay Area,” said PMA President and CEO Jim McKenna. “This updated system has reduced the number of vessels at anchor near our ports, enabling safer operation for vessels and their crews as well as additional protections for coastal communities.”

The number of container ships at anchor and drifting off the coast of Southern California fell to 17 in early January, down from 86 when the updated process went into effect in mid-November, according to Marine Exchange of Southern California, a nonprofit that tracks the movement of vessels.

Nine container vessels were anchored or awaiting a berth near Oakland as of January 7, 2022, a figure that is expected to rise in early 2022. The updated process is not designed to reduce the overall number of vessels calling on the port.

“The Ports of Oakland is a powerful engine for the Northern California economy,” said PMSA President John McLaurin. “This new approach to vessel queuing will help protect this economic driver amid an unprecedented period for consumer demand and inbound cargo volumes.”

“The PMA, PMSA and Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region are implementing this vessel queuing process to promote a fair, efficient and reliable system in a chapter of unprecedented maritime congestion,” said Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region Executive Director Capt. Lynn Korwatch. “We look forward to our region reaping the safety and clean-air benefits as a result.”

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