

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4805

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Daniel B. Maffei
Chairman
Federal Maritime Commission
800 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20573

Dear Chairman Maffei,

I write to express my concerns about the country's ongoing shipping crisis. From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the extreme congestion at our nation's ports has severely impacted American businesses and American families.

Throughout the country, dozens of container ships are anchoring outside of U.S. ports for weeks in advance in order to secure docking space. This has created a backlog for businesses of all sizes and continues to increase their freight costs. Since March 2020, businesses have seen shipping costs triple, and in some cases quadruple. On top of higher costs, it is taking longer for shipments to leave their point of origination and arrive at their destinations, while facing additional timeline uncertainties when en route. Ultimately, higher costs and increased delays have affected the ability of American consumers from purchasing and receiving goods.

Increased consumer demand during the pandemic has resulted in a surge of imports, filling ships, containers, rail cars, and trucks. I would recommend the Federal Maritime Commission, in conjunction with the Biden Administration, take the following actions to alleviate the strain of the growing shipping crisis:

- Ensure that Custom and Border Protection's Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system is being utilized by customs agents to streamline and expedite paperwork and processing.
- Take action to clear the intermodal freight bottlenecks that are critical to the import and export of goods, in particular at congested ports and surrounding, related infrastructure and distribution centers.
- Support the U.S. manufacturing base for shipping containers and chassis. By leveling the playing field, American manufacturers will be able to produce the containers and related equipment U.S. importers and exporters need to meet increased demand.
- Incentivize ocean carriers to provide real-time tracking of vessels to their shipping customers.

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Delays are taking a toll on American businesses, workers, consumers, and our ability to compete in the global marketplace. Without action and strong leadership from the Federal Maritime Commission, this problem will only be exacerbated. I look forward to hearing your prompt response and appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator