

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: June 8, 1979

Forwarded to:
Admiral John B. Hayes
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)
M-79-56 through -58

On December 29, 1978, the outbound Liberian bulk carrier M/V WORLD NOBILITY and the inbound Liberian ore/bulk/oil (OBO) carrier S/S PENNSYLVANIA GETTY collided at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay about 15 nmi east of Norfolk, Virginia. The bow of the PENNSYLVANIA GETTY penetrated the No. 1 cargo hold on the forward port side of the WORLD NOBILITY. No deaths or injuries resulted from the accident; however, the vessels sustained an estimated \$3 million damage. 1/

Maneuvering a vessel in coastal waters requires the continuous collection, coordination, and evaluation of information. Vessel speed, course, position, and proximity to other vessels or obstructions are the critical information elements that a master must obtain to safely navigate his vessel. The Safety Board's analysis of this accident determined that although both vessels were adequately equipped to obtain the necessary information, neither vessel's navigation watch was sufficiently manned to fully use such data. This accident illustrates the need for mandatory regulations or standards that require specific manning levels for vessel navigation watches for various conditions regarding vessel location, traffic density, personnel qualifications, equipment limitations, and visibility.

The Chesapeake Bay is the approach to Norfolk, Newport News, Baltimore, and many lesser ports, such as the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal at Cove Point, Maryland. The WORLD NOBILITY and the PENNSYLVANIA GETTY collided within the precautionary area where all inbound and outbound traffic converge. This is an extremely busy area for vessel traffic, and a similar accident involving two U.S. flag ships, the S/S ROBERT E. LEE and the S/S TRANSINDIANA, occurred there on October 11, 1978. Because of the location of the designated pilotage area, vessels must transit

1/ For more detailed information read "Marine Accident Report: Collision of the M/V WORLD NOBILITY and the SS PENNSYLVANIA GETTY at the Mouth of Chesapeake Bay near Norfolk, Virginia, December 29, 1978," (NTSB-MAR-79-7).

the precautionary area without the assistance of expert local pilots. Furthermore, there is no active, manned Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) to advise vessels of the position, speed, and course of other traffic. Considering the potential for a catastrophic accident, this is not a satisfactory arrangement.

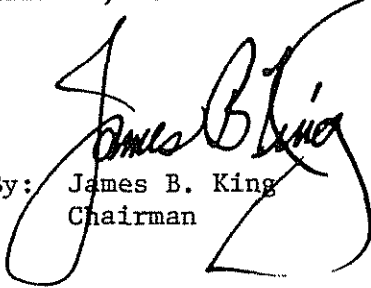
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the U.S. Coast Guard:

Develop navigation watchkeeping standards which quantify the minimum manning level needed for large oceangoing vessels to safely navigate within U.S. ports and their approaches, and amend the Navigation Safety Regulations (33 CFR 164) to incorporate these standards. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-79-56)

Study the feasibility of relocating the Chesapeake Bay pilotage area so that vessels are not forced to transit areas of converging traffic without pilots on board. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-79-57)

Reevaluate the proposed level of vessel traffic service (VTS) in the Chesapeake Bay, and determine if an active, manned system is more appropriate because of the increased traffic density and the transit of vessels transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other hazardous cargoes. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-79-58)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS and HOGUE, Members, concurred in these recommendations.

By: 
James B. King
Chairman