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OP'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-02-2009

To: All Steamship Agents, Owners and Operators

Subject: Dimensions for Future Lock Chambers and "New Panamax" Vessels

The Panama Canal Authority is sailing ahead with its expansion program to virtually double the tonnage capacity of the Panama Canal. The program consists of the construction of two new lock complexes, one on the Pacific and one on the Atlantic side of the waterway, in order to provide a third lock lane capable of handling vessels of greater beams, lengths and drafts. The program also entails the widening and deepening of existing navigational channels in Gatun Lake, Culebra Cut, and the Pacific and Atlantic Entrance Channels.

There have been several recent inquiries from the shipping community regarding the vessel size that the expanded Panama Canal will be able to handle upon completion of the works in 2014. Consequently, we hereby summarize the major elements of the expansion program and their critical dimensions. Each of the new lock complexes will have three chambers, and each chamber will have water-saving basins that will permit the reutilization of up to 60% of the water employed in the lockage of a vessel. The chamber dimensions of the new locks will be 427 meters long, 55 meters wide and 18.3 meters deep. The corresponding maximum dimensions for vessels that will transit these locks are 366 meters LOA, 49 meters in beam and 15.2 meters in tropical freshwater (TFW) draft. These dimensions are being used to define the *New Panamax* size vessel.

When the expansion is completed in 2014, the navigational channels will allow the transit of present post-Panamax containerships; *Suezmax* liquid-bulk tankers; *Capesize* dry-bulk carriers; and larger sizes of liquefied natural gas carriers, passenger ships and other vessel types within the established dimensional limits identified above.

Details on the Panama Canal Expansion Program are available on the Panama Canal website at www.pancanal.com. In addition, those requiring technical assistance with vessel dimensions and appurtenances may contact Transit Operations Executive Manager Capt. Miguel Rodríguez at OPT@pancanal.com or at (507) 272-4218.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

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