

Statement of Richard A. Lidinsky, Jr.
Nominee for Commissioner, Federal Maritime Commission

Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

July 8, 2009

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Senator Hutchison, and members of the Commerce Committee.

My name is Richard A. Lidinsky, Jr., and I am a nominee for Commissioner at the Federal Maritime Commission.

It is a great honor to appear before you today. I would like to introduce my wife of 37 years, Mary Duston. Our older son Richard III lives in Los Angeles with his wife Tiffany Tuttle and so cannot be here today. Our younger son John cannot be here because he is being tested today for entry into the Navy.

My entire legal, public service, and business careers have revolved around the various shipping statutes administered by the FMC. After serving on the staff of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, I was appointed Legislative Counsel at the FMC during one of the Commission's most active and important regulatory periods. I served next as port counsel and director in my home port of Baltimore, leaving after a decade to join as a Vice President of Sea Containers, a global marine manufacturing, leasing, and trading company. During my twenty years in the private sector, I worked closely with the Pentagon to containerize supplies for our troops. I also had the privilege of serving as an advisor to our NATO Delegation on port and intermodal matters.

Over recent decades the FMC has encouraged the innovation of commercial tools, such as "single bills of lading" and "service contracts" to move cargo rapidly, intermodally and economically to and from our vast interior markets. Containerization, the technology that transformed the face of shipping, resulting in the greatest surge of trade the world has ever witnessed, had an early and strong advocate in the Commission. The FMC has played a pivotal role in protecting U.S. flag vessels and American consumers, cruise passengers, importers/exporters and others engaged in our international waterborne commerce.

To deal with the realities of international maritime trade in the 21st century, I believe that the first priority of the FMC is to play its role in our economic recovery. We meet today in what has been described as the "worst year in modern shipping history" as our ports are suffering double-digit cargo declines. Over 500 containerships are laid up or at anchor awaiting work. On certain foreign trade routes, carriers are moving containers virtually for free, charging just handling and fuel costs. Experts predict that any growth will not be seen before next year. It is the role of the FMC to assist through its regulatory powers all segments of our waterborne commerce—vessels, ports, support industries, labor both on board our ships and on our terminals, truckers and railroads—in regaining their economic vitality and jobs when the upturn comes.

If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the FMC discharges its legislative mandates and monitors currently dominant and newly emerging trades, while also observing the impact on our country of how other nations now regulate their ocean carriers. The Commission can also assist ports such as Houston and U.S. flag vessels covered by new EPA/IMO standards and those involved in their operations with Green projects and other job-creating innovations consistent with FMC authority.

For the opportunity to confront these and other challenging issues with my fellow Commissioners, I am most grateful to the President for this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee for our country's protection and prosperity on the world's sea trade routes.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I stand ready to answer any questions you might have for me now or for the record.