

REPORT OF THE OPENING PLENARY

Agenda

1. Opening Remarks
Tia McEwan, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Marine Safety, TC
2. Adoption of Agenda – November 2010
Tia McEwan, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Marine Safety, TC
3. Adoption of CMAC Minutes – April 2010
Tia McEwan, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Marine Safety, TC
4. Partnership
Donald Roussel, Director General, Marine Safety, TC
5. Marine Security Update
Fulvio Fracassi, Director General, Marine Security, TC
6. Canadian Coast Guard Update
René Grenier, Deputy Commissioner, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
7. Other Business
Donald Roussel, Director General, Marine Safety, TC
8. Closing Remarks
Donald Roussel, Director General, Marine Safety, TC

1. OPENING REMARKS

Tia McEwan, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Regulatory Services and Quality Assurance, welcomed attendees to the Fall 2010 National meeting of the Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC). She then introduced the other members of the head table: Donald Roussel, Director General of Marine Safety, Fulvio Fracassi, Director General of Marine Security and René Grenier, Deputy Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard.

Tia McEwan thanked the attendees for the record number - 425 who pre-registered for the meeting. Marine Safety is grateful to their stakeholders, for their ongoing participation and support.

Participants were also reminded that the CMAC identification tags must be worn at all times during the sessions due to the security procedures at the Government Conference Centre.

Every effort is taken to avoid conflicts for stakeholders in attending meetings that interest them and that may, unfortunately, be scheduled at the same time. However, as all of the meetings take place within a 4-day span and there are only so many rooms available, at times it is not possible to avoid all conflicts. Participants were encouraged to note the particular dates and times of the meetings they were interested in attending. Attendees were reminded that all meetings end at 4:30 p.m. sharp so that everyone has sufficient time to exit the Government Conference Centre by 5:00 p.m., as required by the security personnel.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA – NOVEMBER 2010

The agenda for the Opening Plenary was approved without correction.

3. ADOPTION OF CMAC MINUTES – APRIL 2010

The minutes of the April 2010 National CMAC meeting were approved without any corrections.

4. PARTNERSHIP

Donald Roussel, Director General, Marine Safety, thanked everyone for attending the Fall 2010 National CMAC meeting.

The following is an excerpt of Donald Roussel's remarks.

During some turbulent economic conditions, budgets continue to be tightened, and so many may question the value of meetings such as these. But perhaps by the end of today, you will agree that with our continued partnership, we can make the Canadian Marine Transportation system one that is safer, sustainable, and more environmentally responsible than ever before.

As you all know and experience in your daily lives, our world is largely interdependent and interconnected through travel, trade, and communications. Our issues are no longer defined by the boundaries of our provinces or country. In understanding how interconnected our issues really are, it is imperative to recognize the consequences that may follow within our global marine communities. Whether political, social, or economic, what happens in one part of the world may directly affect the Canadian marine industry, government, and the way we live our lives.

The role CMAC plays in our marine community is critical. What happens here at CMAC, and in our part of the world, can have the same effect around the globe. What we do, talk about, and decide here, matters. So let us embrace this opportunity to better collaborate, to more effectively and efficiently solve the issues that impact our marine communities on local, national, and international levels.

Twice a year, we invite you to CMAC to listen, voice your opinions, and see the progress that has been made. I assure you that we put a great deal of effort to making this event a success, and as our partners, we appreciate the time you have invested to be here today. Through this gathering, we want to ensure that you have a fair and balanced picture of Marine Safety in Canada, and to know not only where we are, but also where we are heading.

Understand that your continued participation at CMAC may be the 'official' component of our partnership with you. But remember, this partnership does not end on Thursday. We want this official gathering to reflect the last six months and the next six months of ongoing good practices, working relationships, and – yes – partnership between Transport Canada, and you as our stakeholders.

Every entity needs a partnership to achieve greatness. Partnerships are collaborative relationships between entities that require smart action and firm commitment. Participants in collaborative partnerships agree to be engaged, work together, and achieve a common goal. By virtue of a partnership, participants like you and me, share the risks, responsibilities, resources, and most importantly, the results.

So today, I want you to keep the concept of partnership in mind. I encourage your active participation, ideas, and your voice, because in partnership, all of us will benefit from the results.

Evaluation Report and Management Response

Now, I would like to talk a little about our evaluation report and management response, so that you can see how your government of Canada partner is fairing. As part of ongoing governance, Marine Safety recently underwent an internal program evaluation. The results of this evaluation were recently presented to us, and included several recommendations. This evaluation is timely, seeing as we are in the midst of such a great amount of change – including the ongoing review and amendment of an unprecedented number of regulations, standards and publications under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*. As you can appreciate, having worked with us through our consultations, this has taken a great deal of mutual focus and energy.

I am proud to mention that while the Evaluation Report identifies some areas where Marine Safety activities could be improved, it does state that the majority of expectations and goals were achieved. Furthermore, Marine Safety has already carried out many proactive approaches to address those areas that require more development. The Evaluation Report identified five recommendations:

First, the Report recommended that Marine Safety focus more on fishing vessel safety and small vessel safety to maintain or improve the trend of reduced marine fatalities and commercial marine accidents. Marine Safety responded that inspection policies will be enhanced to target small fishing vessels and other small vessels. These enhanced policies will require that each region develop a schedule of small vessel compliance inspections for their region.

The Transportation Safety Board (TSB) is coming to the pinnacle of their investigation into the safety of small fishing vessels. The TSB investigation has, at its core, the belief that a holistic approach is necessary. I assure you, any recommendations made as a result of the TSB investigation will be addressed in a manner that supports safety of the small fishing vessel fleet, while taking into account the viability of the industry. But if we are to have a holistic solution, it will mean that we must do in collaboration with one another. Otherwise anything less, will not succeed.

The second recommendation was for Marine Safety to improve the way we document, categorize, and analyze deficiencies under Flag State Control. Over the next couple years, Marine Safety will enhance our Flag State Control database by standardizing the collection and analysis of deficiencies of Canadian registered vessels. This should enhance our capacity to identify and target risk, by providing a uniform approach to the categorization of deficiencies.

The next recommendation was for Marine Safety to adopt a systematic approach to provide training to inspectors, both refresher training and specialized training. We will enhance our list of nationally organized “mandatory” and “specialized” training, which makes up the core training of our Marine Safety inspectors. This list will form the basis for a policy that will define national and region-specific training.

Another recommendation is for Marine Safety to strengthen its functional leadership and monitor delegated activities. Marine Safety is working to streamline senior management responsibilities to enhance the functional direction provided to regional offices and, therefore, to the marine industry stakeholders.

The final recommendation is for Marine Safety to conduct a review of its inspection fees, with a view of finding ways to bringing them closer to market rates for similar services. We see this as a priority, and will continue the work that is currently being done in this area. A plan to bring inspection fees in line with market rates, TBS Guidelines, and the *User Fee Act* will be developed.

As you know, to guide us in these endeavours, Marine Safety has a strategic plan in place, as well as a draft business plan, which will be shared with you once finalized.

Marine Safety Priorities

I would also like to talk about a couple of Marine Safety's priorities. You will, of course, be able to hear more about all the files we are advancing during the sessions this week. First, I would like to touch on our progress regarding a couple environmental issues.

As you know, we are making progress on the Emission Control Area on our East and West coasts that we previously announced. With International Maritime Organization adopting the proposal put forth by Canada, the U.S., and supported by France, we are now in a position to be able to reduce air pollution from ships transiting this area. Regarding the Great Lakes, as you in the industry are well aware, the Canadian Lakers are vastly different from the U.S. fleet, and were in danger of suffering from regulations proposed by the U.S. We are working to come to a mutually agreeable solution, and will continue to work on this. However, we must also recognize that the Canadian Great Lakes fleet is in need of modernization, and since the majority of this fleet relies on residual fuel, we will need to consider a different approach. On Friday, October 1, the announcement by the Minister of Finance regarding the repeal of the 25 percent duty signified a major commitment from the Government to support the renewal of Canada's fleet. We will now examine options for how a renewed fleet in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway can meet stringent standards on air pollution. On that same Friday, late at night in London England at the IMO, its member countries agreed to technical regulations under Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention, which includes efficiency targets new ships must meet. This represents a significant breakthrough in international negotiations to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from ships. You will hear more about these and other environmental updates during the sessions this week.

Through the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*, we are transitioning to a risk-based inspection regime. For Marine Safety, this means using a risk-based approach to direct inspection resources towards operators that require more assistance to meet regulatory requirements. It also means that Marine Safety must have a strong oversight regime, one that has learned from the best practices of existing international models, and one that the inspectorate supports. Last winter I met with all Marine Safety Inspectors to further enhance awareness and understanding of the requirements of the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*, and the strategic direction that Marine Safety is taking. We pledge to continue to communicate to our inspectors, management, and to you as our stakeholders, on progress we are making.

Finally, Transport Canada is actively participating in the Government of Canada's initiatives to streamline regulatory processes, which, for Marine Safety, includes continued modernization of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*. To this end, we've completed consultations on the conversion of the Minor Works and Waters Order and are now drafting the proposed regulations, which we expect to bring into force by 2012. We will, of course, provide more information in the session this week.

I have only mentioned a select few out of many initiatives that will be brought to you during this CMAC. I encourage you to discuss, bring your ideas forward, and in partnership with us, pioneer solutions that will contribute to safer, sustainable, and more environmentally responsible marine communities.

Before I turn the microphone over to the next speaker, I remind you that our partnership does not end when we depart on Thursday. As you become engaged through your support, guidance, and comments this week, and when you return home, the need to work together, in partnership, will remain essential in order for us succeed. The way forward will require flexibility and compromise, which rings true in the nature of partnership.

Comments from the Floor

Terry Engler, representing Vancouver-based International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 400, thanked Donald Roussel for his words on partnership. He added that there continues to be an element of frustration among marine unions regarding the process of consultation, especially when things change after a consensus seems to have been reached. Terry Engler cited the *Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* and the issue of small tugboats, as specific examples.

Donald Roussel responded by saying that Transport Canada is open to making adjustments to those elements that may have caused frustration either by policy or other means. He emphasized that regulations are reviewed regularly so that issues that have not been adequately addressed may be part of future discussions.

5. MARINE SECURITY UPDATE

Fulvio Fracassi, Director General, Marine Security stated that it was a pleasure to be here at CMAC to speak about securing Canada's marine transportation system today and into the future. We are all well aware of the important role the Government of Canada and industry partners, such as yourself, play in ensuring that our marine transportation system is secure and trusted by our trading partners.

The following is an excerpt of Fulvio Fracassi's remarks.

Today, I would like to highlight Marine Security accomplishments since the spring meeting of CMAC. I would also like to discuss our anticipated activities moving forward. I have organized these accomplishments and future activities from a domestic, trans-border, and international perspective.

Domestic Accomplishments

From a marine security perspective, the **G-8 and G-20 summits** held in late June were successful. Of particular note, the G-20 summit was the first time that security measures were used to establish zones around key assets for a planned or organized event. This required extensive coordination between international, federal, provincial, municipal and industry/private marine security stakeholders.

Small Vessel and Facility Security Strategy

Following extensive consultations on vessels and facilities not regulated by Transport Canada's *Marine Transportation Security Regulations*, Transport Canada has initiated several voluntary small vessel and facility security initiatives relating to small commercial vessels, fishing vessels, pleasure craft, and small vessel facilities. Brochures promoting security awareness will be distributed shortly at various stakeholder venues. Also in the near future, Transport Canada and other partners will organize regional marine security workshops for law enforcement marine units at all levels of government.

Another key priority for the department is **Maritime Commerce Resumption**. We have focused a great deal on measures to prevent security breaches from happening. However, we need to be equally prepared should an incident occur so that systems are in place to ensure that commerce may resume as soon as possible. I would like to thank Port Metro Vancouver for their good work in developing a Maritime Commerce Resumption Plan in the Pacific Region. This pilot project was completed this past spring. Transport Canada is working with other levels of government and industry to develop similar plans for the ports of Montreal, Hamilton and Halifax. These projects should be completed by next March.

We are continuing our review of the comments that were received during national consultations on the *Maritime Transportation Security Regulations*. The proposed amendments will be discussed in detail at the Standing Committee on Marine Security meeting on Wednesday.

Similarly, we are continuing to develop the *Marine Security Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations* to make them consistent with our existing legislative regime.

As you know, the **use of marine vessels for human smuggling** remains a top security concern. Recently, the federal government introduced legislation to address marine human smuggling to Canada. The proposed legislation includes amendments to the *Marine Transportation Security Act* penalty scheme. More details on the legislative changes will be provided at the Standing Committee meeting. To help raise international awareness of the unsafe practices associated with the smuggling and transport of migrants, Transport Canada will submit a report to the IMO on the *Sun Sea* and *Ocean Lady* incidents.

Canada-United States Accomplishments

We continue to make progress in our relationship with our U.S. counterparts. The **Compliance and Enforcement Working Group** has expanded into a bi-national working group focused on operational issues across the two countries. Meetings were held in April and September to discuss small vessel security, information sharing protocols, risk assessment protocols, and alternative security arrangements.

We have also developed an **engagement strategy** to advance Canadian marine security interests in the United States. The strategy has led to discussions on a range of issues, including marine transportation security clearances and enhancements to the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. Going forward, we would like to see this relationship grow beyond operational issues to include regulatory and policy activities.

In September, representatives from key Canadian and American departments and agencies attended a forum on interagency **Maritime Domain Awareness**. The forum was a first opportunity to consider common interests regarding our shared maritime perimeter from a whole of government perspective. To further the work we've started, a working group is being created and will report on its progress in March 2011.

Transport Canada has worked closely with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure our respective **Small Vessel and Facility Security Strategies** are complementary. To build on this collaboration, we will consider opportunities such as joint exercises as well as patrol and enforcement initiatives in marine border areas.

Since 2004, we have been in discussions with the U.S. Transportation Security Administration on the need to harmonize the **marine transportation security clearances**. An update on the progress of the comparability board discussions will be presented during the Standing Committee meeting.

Regulatory harmonization with the United States is another key area of emphasis. This is linked to the work we are doing on updating our *Marine Transportation Security Regulations*.

International Accomplishments

Last May, Transport Canada attended the 87th session of the International Maritime Organization **Maritime Safety Committee** (MSC) where piracy and armed robbery dominated discussions. Further details on the discussion items for the next session of the IMO Committee (MSC 88), including potential enhancements to the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, will be provided at the Standing Committee.

Transport Canada is a recognized leader in developing and offering maritime security **capacity building** assistance to the international community. Through the Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, we have participated in programs in Uruguay, Brazil, and Jamaica.

Fulvio Fracassi concluded his remarks by saying that while much has been accomplished for marine security both at home and abroad, more work remains to be done. He added that his approach has always been to consult and work with stakeholders, and he looks forward to hearing from interested parties at the Standing Committee on Marine Security.

Comments from the Floor

Peter Lahay, Coordinator, Vancouver-based International Transport Workers' Federation (ITWF), thanked Fulvio Fracassi for the report. He also expressed some disappointment in the delay of amendments to the *Maritime Transport Security Regulations*. After an exhaustive national consultation process and innumerable hours and effort having gone into preparing the package, Peter Lahay said that there is no longer certainty about what will be in the package of amendments and asked Fulvio Fracassi for specific answers on the timing. Fulvio Fracassi responded that while he appreciates Peter Lahay's frustration, there is still a need to scrutinize the extensive volume of comments that have been received. He added that the commitment to move forward on these regulations, as quickly as possible, is unchanged.

7. CANADIAN COAST GUARD UPDATE

René Grenier, Deputy Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, was pleased to provide an update on some of the many projects and initiatives the Canadian Coast Guard has been working on. As always, the Coast Guard looks forward to continuing to build their relationship with the stakeholders, and they see these meetings as an opportunity to continue strengthening their network.

The following is an excerpt of René Grenier's remarks.

Once again, it is my pleasure to join you today. As always, I look forward to working closely with you and our federal partners this week. This is also a terrific opportunity to strengthen our network with many of you in the room today.

In the past few years, and even since our last meeting, our Agency has seen a number of changes both within and outside the organization. Many of these are indicative of the expectations and needs of the Government of Canada, of our clients and stakeholders, and of Canadians; while others can be attributed to the ever-changing marine environment as well as to our own operating environment. The most recent are in fact changes within Coast Guard's most senior positions.

George Da Pont, Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, has moved to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. **Marc Grégoire**, who was most recently Assistant Deputy Minister of Safety and Security at Transport Canada, took over the role this past June. **Michel Vermette**, former Director General of Maritime Services, accepted the newly created position of Deputy Commissioner, Vessel Procurement. Michel Vermette will play a leading role in the Coast Guard's fleet renewal efforts and in supporting the government in its commitment toward the naval construction industry in Canada. **Jacqueline Gonçalves** joined the team as Director General of Maritime Services. She comes from the Science Division at Fisheries and Oceans where she led several important programs.

Last, but not least, the Coast Guard welcomed **Jody Thomas** to the role of Deputy Commissioner of Operations last September. Formerly Chief Operating Officer with Passport Canada, Jody Thomas is the 2009 gold medal winner in the IPAC/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Awards for her work in creating a new customer service model to address the skyrocketing demands for passports in 2007.

Growing Demands on Coast Guard Services

One thing is unmistakable: there is a growing need and demand for Coast Guard services. Changing marine traffic patterns, increased commercial use of the oceans, and technological advances in the maritime sector have led to requests for us to adapt our programs and services. The events surrounding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, as well as recent vessel groundings in the Arctic, have sharpened the focus on the risk to our marine environment and Coast Guard's capacity to respond.

Canada's maritime security also remains a high priority to Canadians who expect the federal government to have the expertise, training and capacity to respond to a coastal or on-water crisis and to support our civilian enforcement community. The recent illegal drug seizures and the advent of migrant vessels are more than enough evidence of the need for an effective response to maritime incidents.

All of these factors will have a major, horizontal impact on the Coast Guard, both now and in the future; it is why we have already begun addressing those concerns through renewal, innovation, and vision. The renewal of both our on-water and shore-based assets and infrastructure represent an important part of our response to evolving demands.

Aging Equipment and Infrastructure

Our top priority remains Coast Guard's on-water assets, our ships and our helicopters. Since 2005, we have been successful in securing over \$1.4 billion from the Government of Canada to build 14 new large vessels, \$27.3 million in the most recent Budget for a new hovercraft for the West Coast, and funding under the Economic Action Plan for a variety of small craft, and repair and maintain our current fleet. Our ongoing procurement projects, which are all proceeding well, are on schedule. Because it takes years to build new vessels, the need to replace our fleet is well recognized, it must be considered in the light of current economic reality. The Coast Guard is committed to continue to develop its Fleet Renewal Plan in line with Government direction.

In addition to our aging fleet, many of our shore-based assets are beyond their operational life expectancy and also continue to deteriorate. Consequently, we must think of the long-term usability of our shore-based infrastructure which is why we will present a 15-year plan for the capital investments required to ensure the reliability and availability of our shore-based assets that will address concerns regarding our ability to provide information on the condition of our infrastructure and improve our capacity to plan and prioritize maintenance, replacement and divestiture activities.

While it is true that the Coast Guard must meet its commitment and obligations, we must also look to the future and seize opportunities that may present themselves. Three such opportunities for the Coast Guard, are the Arctic, Maritime Security and Environmental Response.

CCG in the Arctic

The reduction in the permanent ice cap, the growing world demand for resources, and the ability to navigate throughout the year in the Arctic all represent new challenges. The Coast Guard is proud of the services it offers in the Arctic. We've often been the first to arrive and the last to leave; currently we are present in the region from the end of June until mid-November. The shortening of the ice season has increased access to navigable waters in the Arctic for both commercial and recreational vessels.

We are working toward an integrated approach to our role in the Arctic. This will include a strategic vision as part of our Strategy for the North – one that will allow us to continue to offer current initiatives and to respect our obligations to the people living and navigating in the northern regions. The Coast Guard supports the efforts of the Canadian government to negotiate a search and rescue agreement with other Arctic countries. This agreement, which should be signed in May 2011, represents the first international treaty among countries in the Arctic Council.

Maritime Security

Maritime security is a relatively new role for the Canadian Coast Guard. As Deputy Commissioner, I have been responsible for this growing sector for three years and I can assure you that we are recognized as having an essential role as a federal partner in maritime security. For instance, we contribute to improving the knowledge base with our vessel tracking system, provide offshore support for law enforcement and national security and strengthen cooperation among departments and agencies. The international community not only considers the Coast Guard as a partner but as a leader in developing initiatives for identification and remote tracking. One of our employees, Tracy Peverett, has just been nominated as head of maritime security at the International Maritime Organization.

I expect that our participation in such activities will increase over the next few years. In the government's response to the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which examined ways of improving Canada's presence in the North, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recently announced the intention to arm Coast Guard icebreakers to strengthen our sovereignty in the Arctic.

Environmental Response

The recent Deepwater Horizon blow out and major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was disastrous. Eleven lives were lost, more were seriously injured, and the oil that flowed from the well was enough to be considered to be catastrophic oil spill each day. Even the United States Coast Guard – which is about 10 times the size of the Canadian Coast Guard – struggled with the sheer magnitude of this spill. And of course this summer, when two major vessels – a cruise ship and tanker – grounded in our Arctic, it brought home the challenges of responding in our remote North.

It goes without saying there are many lessons to be learned from such events, and we need to be prepared to both lead and support a response to marine pollution. Environmental response is an international file, with responsibilities and interests that spread across all levels of government and industry. Preparedness and response to marine pollution events falls within the mandate of Canadian Coast Guard. Regardless of the source and location of pollution, Canadians and the government fully expect us to be ready and able to respond.

Reinvigorating Coast Guard's environmental response capacity is required to ensure adequate capacity to respond. Renewing the program's focus on preparedness and planning, and better interoperability with our federal partners, will be key priorities for us in the coming years. As a first step, a Director of Environmental Response has been appointed within Coast Guard, with a mandate to strengthen national program governance, ensure greater interdepartmental collaboration at the HQ level, and re-affirm Coast Guard's position as a leader in Canada's environmental preparedness and response capacity.

Conclusion

As you can see, the Coast Guard faces a big agenda with big challenges, but the future also presents a number of great opportunities for the Agency. For example, as I mentioned during previous meetings, Canada continues to be a world leader in the implementation of the e-Navigation concept and we intend to continue our leadership both domestically and internationally. Over the summer, Canada provided the International Maritime Organization with the results of the comprehensive e-Navigation user need survey it conducted last year. Work is currently under way to crunch the data acquired as part of this survey to get a better sense of the actual user requirements to be met under e-Navigation so we can influence the international direction of e-Navigation and to help bring e-Navigation from design to practice in Canada based on real stated needs. In addition, we are now working with Transport Canada, the Canadian Hydrographic Service, and Environment Canada, to develop a federal vision that will be used federally to guide everyone's efforts in this journey.

However, we must face the fact that, as with all other federal government departments and agencies, we are in a period of fiscal restraint. Our key challenges will be to deliver on our commitments and invest in our future while ensuring the delivery of existing programs and services. During these lean times, partnerships with our federal partners and with industry will be vital to our success. While we all have different mandates and perspectives, we all share a common goal – a safe, secure and efficient marine transportation system in Canada.

The importance of CMAC was never more obvious – it provides a forum to openly discuss issues of common interest, foster more meaningful partnerships, and find collaborative solutions to our shared challenges. We must all work to continue to support a healthy and productive CMAC by continuing to openly and honestly exchange information. That wraps up my opening remarks.

After 37 years, I have decided to retire from the public service as of this January. It has truly been an honour for me to represent the Coast Guard at the CMAC table and to have the privilege of working with all of you to meet our mutual interests with respect to Canada's maritime industry. I am delighted to pass the torch to Jody and have every confidence that she will continue to build on our great working relationship. I would like to thank all of you for your support over the years. Together, we were able to work toward our common goal – safe and secure waters.

Comments from the Floor

Donald Roussel took an opportunity to convey his appreciation for the many contributions René Grenier has made, both personally and in his role as Deputy Commissioner, over his years of service.

Regarding the Canadian Coast Guard's intention to remove lightstation services in British Columbia and Newfoundland, Terry Engler, ILWU Local 400, spoke on behalf of Jim Abram, who worked as a lightkeeper in British Columbia for 25 years and who was unable to be present. This initiative would have a huge impact on the marine community. It threatens to remove one of the most valuable tools of ensuring good decisions in planning travel to and from work areas on both coasts. Lightkeepers provide the following services: reliable and accurate weather observations; assistance to mariners in relaying weak radio signals, tracking down overdue boats, and assisting vessels in distress with pumps, first aid, and sanctuary for the crew; preparing staging grounds for medivacs and acting as refuelling stations for search and rescue efforts; and collection of scientific data over the long term. Lightkeepers also help to ensure Canada's sovereignty and security by establishing a strong federal presence and watch on our coastlines. A review of lightstation services is now before the Standing Senate Committee of Fisheries and Oceans. It is essential that mariners support each other in maintaining essential services. Please submit your comments to fish-peche@sen.parl.gc.ca. Your support will carry a great deal of weight with the deciding bodies.

Zak Farid, representing the Nautical Institute B.C. Branch, asked René Grenier to elaborate on the idea of arming Coast Guard icebreakers. Although he couldn't say what the outcome would be, René Grenier indicated that the Agency is looking at the possibility of having other departments and partners work on a study from which a recommendation to the Government would evolve.

Jim Hawkins, Imperial Oil Ltd, congratulated the crew of the CCGS Amundsen for the great job they did in rescuing the stranded cruise ship tourists a few months ago. In response to René Grenier's comments regarding the Coast Guard seeking additional capability for environmental response and for search and rescue, particularly in the Arctic, Jim Hawkins asked for more details on any physical capability improvements. Specifically, he wanted to know what the Coast Guard is looking at in terms of vessels and equipment needed to respond to environmental, as well as search and rescue incidents in the Canadian Arctic.

René Grenier responded that the primary focus is on leadership. A second focus will be on practice. In terms of equipment, the Coast Guard is providing Arctic communities with some local containers with oil pollution equipment and is conducting some training for the people handling the oil ashore. He added that the training might expand to include people in the villages as well. He also said that he expects that, once operational, the polarized breaker will carry much more equipment than the icebreakers do at this time.

Ivan Lantz, Shipping Federation of Canada, spoke about the increase in the ship reporting that is required by a number of departments since 9/11. He suggests that there be a way under the FAL Convention to consolidate all the information that is transmitted from ships into a single window. Ivan Lantz encouraged René Grenier to take this suggestion to the Coast Guard senior management because of the present lack of mandate to share information between departments. In his view, consolidating the reporting requirements would reduce the risks of an intervention or interruption in transport should there be an error in the information transmitted, and lessen the red tape workload on mariners.

René Grenier responded that the Coast Guard is the means by which the information is acquired and as far as the Agency knows, there are no legal barriers to sharing this information. Fulvio Fracassi added a couple of points on the topic of information sharing. First, he mentioned that a provision has been included in the current Bill on human smuggling to allow Transport Canada to make regulations to improve how information is shared with its partners, both for security and for safety purposes. As well, one of the key components that has been identified in the Marine Security Strategy is improved information sharing. This is an issue that will remain front and center to address some of the challenges that Ivan Lantz has identified.

Mark Boucher, Ships' Officers Guild, offered his thanks to René Grenier, on behalf of labour representatives, for his leadership, hard work, and valued approach to reaching consensus.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Donald Roussel encouraged participants to submit nominations for the 2011 Marine Safety Award, using forms that are included in the registration kits, by January 10, 2011. The Award will be presented at the April 2011 National CMAC meeting.

8. CLOSING REMARKS

Donald Roussel invited everyone to a special Opening Night reception this evening, beginning at 5:00 pm here in the Main Lounge of the Government Conference Center. Since 2008, Canada has brought into force 11 international maritime conventions (including one maritime convention with the International Labour Organization) that will help to reduce air and water pollution from ships in Canadian waters, and ensure the safety of vessels, goods and workers in the marine sector. Transport Canada led Canada's ratification of these conventions with support from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Labour Canada, and Environment Canada. This special Reception is being held to thank you, our marine stakeholders, for your valuable input and cooperation with the Government of Canada in these accomplishments.

The April 2011 Session of National CMAC was originally scheduled for April 25th to 28th, 2011, here at the Government Conference Centre. It was brought to our attention that the Monday of that week is a government wide holiday as it is Easter Monday. Therefore, we have had to adjust our arrangements slightly for this one session and the meeting will now take place from Tuesday, April 26th to Friday, April 29th. The CMAC Website has been revised to reflect this change in dates.

Donald Roussel wished everyone a good week of meetings and officially closed the Opening Plenary.