



LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mandated by
California Oil Spill Prevention and
Response Act of 1990

MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE LA/LB HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 1 April 2026

The Two Hundred-Seventh Meeting of the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee convened in person at the Port of Long Beach Administration Building, 1st Floor Multi-Purpose Room, with hybrid/virtual option. **Chairperson Betz** called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. **Executive Secretary Louttit** determined a quorum of voting members was present (11 present at start and 12 after new alternate member sworn in; need 9).

**FOR THE PORT OF
LONG BEACH**

Mr. Darin Wright

**FOR THE TANKER
OPERATORS**

Capt. Rob McCaughey
(Jankovich)

**FOR TUG & BARGE
OPERATORS**

Mr. Brian Vartan
(Leo Marine Services)

FOR ORGANIZED LABOR

Absent

**FOR COMMERCIAL
FISHING**

Absent

**FOR THE CALIFORNIA
STATE LANDS COMMISSION**

Mr. Justin Wood

FOR THE CDF&W/OSPR

Mr. Claudio Herrera

FOR THE U.S. NAVY

Absent

**FOR THE PORT OF
LOS ANGELES**

Absent

**FOR THE LOS ANGELES
PILOT ORGANIZATION**

Capt. Jeff White
(LAP)

**FOR DRY CARGO VESSEL
OPERATORS**

Capt. David Bennet
(MATSON)

**FOR THE CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION**

Mr. Jonathan Bishop

**FOR THE NON-PROFIT
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
ORGANIZATIONS FOR
SANTA MONICA BAY**

Vacant

**FOR PASSENGER FERRY
OPERATORS**

Mr. Erik Bombard
(Catalina Express)

**FOR U.S. COAST GUARD
SECTOR LOS ANGELES and
LONG BEACH**

Capt. Jarrod DeWitz, USCG

FOR THE USACOE

Absent

**FOR THE LONG BEACH
PILOT ORGANIZATION**

Capt. Mark Coynes (JPS)

**FOR THE OFF-SHORE
TERMINALS' MOORING
MASTERS**

Capt. Thomas Osborne
(Chevron)

**FOR RECREATIONAL
BOATING OPERATORS**

Capt. John Betz (CBYC)

**FOR MARINE OIL TERMINAL
OPERATORS**

Absent

**FOR THE NON-PROFIT
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
ORGANIZATIONS FOR LA/LB**

Mr. Garry Brown

**FOR THE SHIP'S AGENT
ORGANIZATION**

Mr. Cory Nelson
(Interport)

FOR THE NOAA/NOS

Absent

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Capt. J. Kipling Louttit
(MX SoCal)

ALTERNATES, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, and OTHER PARTIES (SEE ATTACHED LIST)

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Chairperson Betz welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked all for their interest in and participation on the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee. **Chairperson Betz** briefed that the meeting is open to any member of the public, meeting materials were distributed in advance and copies were at the door, the agenda was posted and distributed in advance, there will be a Public Comment period during the meeting, and reviewed location of emergency exits and rest rooms. Attendees were reminded to sign in. The Committee thanks the Port of Long Beach for making the Multi-Purpose Room in their Administration Building available for the meeting. **Executive Secretary Louttit** reviewed hybrid/virtual option meeting protocols and noted **Mrs. Joyce Kaplan** of the Marine Exchange staff was operating the video technology and watching the chat function for comments and questions. It was confirmed virtual attendees could both hear and speak, with several Members virtual. **Chairperson Betz** had all members in the room and on-line identify themselves.

ACTION ITEMS:

- (1) **Mr. Herrera** stated that **Capt. David Bennet** was appointed alternate member representing Dry Cargo Vessel Operators. **Mr. Herrera** administered the oath to **Capt. Bennet** and reminded him to sign paperwork and return paperwork after the meeting.

ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

- (1) **Chairperson Betz** stated the minutes of the 206th meeting on 4 February 2026 were distributed in advance and made a motion to approve the minutes as written. There were no additions, deletions, or corrections. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM II: OLD BUSINESS:

- 1) **Chairperson Betz** called for an update on Marine Exchange Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) activities from **Capt. Louttit**, who reported:
 - a) **Incidents:** There were 0 incidents since the last HSC meeting in February. This puts us at 3 total incidents 2026, 1 fewer than this date last year.
 - b) **Traffic Report:** **Capt. Louttit** referred to the handout that was sent with the read-aheads. New information since the last HSC meeting in February is color coded light blue. 712 ships of all types arrived in January and February 2026, 25 fewer than would be "normal," based on 12.5 arrivals/day that arrived in 2018-2019 before COVID, and 48 fewer than arrived a year ago in January and February 2025. Of the 712 total ship arrivals, highlights of 3 ship types: 326 container ships arrived in January and February, 8 fewer than would be "normal" based on 5.7 arrivals/day that arrived in 2018-2019 before COVID, but 3 more than arrived during the same 2-month period last year. 88 cruise ships arrived, 19 more than would be "normal," and 2 more than 2025. However, foreign tanker arrivals continue very low. 41 arrivals in January and February 2026, half of "normal" pre-COVID, and 3 fewer than the same period in 2025.

Arrival and Departure routes to and from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in January and February 2026 were largely within 1 percent of 2025 levels, with about 47% arriving from the North, 13% from the West, 38% from the South, and 3% from the East (the Chevron Offshore Marine Terminal in El Segundo). Departures to the West were 18% and to Chevron in the East 3%. The 2 exceptions were a dip from 46% to 40% departing to the North and an uptick from 34% to 39% departing to the South. There were no issues and we have no information as to reasons for the changes.

c) **3 Final Comments:**

- i) **New Foxtrot and Golf Anchorages:** As reported at the last meeting, the transition to the new anchorage locations that started 12 December 2025 was very, very smooth. By our estimate, 75% of arriving ships had the new charts with a few days, 99% had the new charts by the last meeting in February, and 100% have them now. In addition to updating all of our electronic systems with the new ENC Charts, we bought 3 paper copies of the 5 local charts which are part of our business resumption plan.
 - ii) We implemented high wind anchorage protocols twice for a few days each time since the last HSC meeting in February. There were no issues and both times there was a mix of vessels choosing to go to sea and those choosing to remain at anchor. The high wind protocols that were in the Harbor Safety Plan are now in the New Anchorages CFRs that went into effect 9 October 2025. High wind protocols are enacted when wind is forecast or observed more than 35 knots. The VTS stops anchoring arriving vessels 48 hours in advance. Vessels already at anchor and choosing to remain at anchor must have their 2nd anchor ready for letting go and their engine in immediate standby.
 - iii) **Whales:** At the request of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, we continue to advise all inbound and outbound vessels to keep a sharp lookout for whales.
- d) **Chairperson Betz** queried whether there were any questions; there were none.
- 2) **Update on USCG Sector LA/LB and AMSC activities:** **Capt. DeWitz** reported:
- a) The DHS (Department of Homeland Security) lapse of appropriations is in its 47th day. Required and essential operations continue but discretionary activities and operations are largely suspended.
 - b) **Major Incidents:** **Capt. Dewitz** thanked port partners for their expertise and assistance during the Berth E-26 incident response in the port. This incident involved the offload of 9 containers from a precarious position onboard a container vessel, which contained potentially dangerous cargo which could have caused a dangerous gaseous plume from the container vessel. The vessel first anchored outside the harbor to secure the tipped containers and then moored at the LBCT (Long Beach Container Terminal). Thanks to partnerships and local expertise, the affected cargo was successfully unloaded without any negative impacts to people, property, or commerce. BZ (well done!) to everyone involved! As the incident itself occurred on a foreign-flagged vessel in international waters, there is currently no Coast Guard investigation into the event. The joint investigations into the two previous events (ONE HENRY HUDSON and MISSISSIPPI) are still pending. The Coast Guard is working diligently with investigating agency partners and will pass on findings and recommendations when available.
 - c) **GPS Outages:** Following the GPS (Global Positioning System) interruption event in January 2026, Sector LA/LB personnel, with support from port partners and the Coast Guard Navigation Center (NAVCEN), continue to monitor the possibility of future interruptions. NAVCEN publishes a list of testing events which *may* result in additional interruptions. There was a recent testing event for two weeks in the second half of March; no interruptions were reported or noted. That said, mariners are reminded to use all available means of safe navigation, including alternate and redundant systems as available. GPS interruptions can be reported to the NAVCEN via their website.

- d) **VTB Construction:** The Vincent Thomas Bridge (VTB) re-decking project is kicking off this month. There is no anticipated waterway impact beyond a temporary 2.5-foot reduction in air draft. During installation of the under-bridge shielding, CalTrans and their contractor will provide a workboat to monitor and mitigate risk from materials potentially falling into the navigable waterway. The workboat will coordinate traffic with the VTS and the LA Pilot Service, and work will stop on the bridge while any vessels are present directly underneath the site. Questions and concerns can be directed to the Sector LA/LB WWM (Waterway Management) Division, who are in direct communication with CalTrans and their Public Information Officers.
- e) **Autonomous Vessel Operations:** The Coast Guard continues to monitor autonomous operations and intends to keep the Committee apprised of major developments. During the last HSC-SC-1 (Navigation Safety Subcommittee) meeting, our representative requested input from stakeholders on recommended best practices to standardize safe operations for new or developing autonomous operations. Please continue to forward this input to the Waterways Management Division so we can keep moving forward with this effort.
- f) **CG CYBER CPT Risk Assessments:** The Coast Guard's Cyber Command is offering Cyber Risk Assessments via their Cyber Protection Team's hunt and assessment missions. These missions are intended to help buy down risk ahead of major upcoming events such as the Superbowl, FIFA World Cup, and 2028 Olympics. While applications were due to CGCYBER by 27 February, interested parties are still encouraged to reach out for potential service.
- g) **2028 Olympic/Paralympic Games:** The Coast Guard and partner federal agencies have established the Maritime Safety/Security Subcommittee to the Olympic/Paralympic Games NSSE (National Special Security Event). Multiple Subcommittee Chair meetings have been held and the Full Subcommittee met last week. The Subcommittee is in its infancy, but more information will follow as we move closer to the 2028 Games.
- h) **Geopolitical Impacts:** The Coast Guard is monitoring overseas geopolitical events and collecting data on any impacts to our local, regional, or national commerce. The Coast Guard is particularly interested in any trend changes in oil and gas markets. Understanding this information may take weeks/months to develop, the Coast Guard requests any insights or available analyses be passed to the WWM Division for forwarding to Coast Guard Southwest District in Alameda, and Headquarters. There was a 60-day Jones Act suspension; please report any impacts to the Coast Guard.
- i) **Chairperson Betz** queried whether there were any questions:
 - i) **Capt. Louttit** commented that regarding autonomous vessels, the SPLASH company has been very good about informing the VTS when their vessel is operating. **Capt. Louttit** queried protocols for stopping vessels while the shield is being installed under the Vincent Thomas Bridge. **Lcdr. Kevin Kinsella** responded that small vessels and yachts would be directed to transit under the bridge in a location where work is not being performed; work would be stopped for a large, deep draft vessel.
 - ii) There was a question regarding duration of the work. **Lcdr. Kinsella** responded that he believed it would take 6 months to install the underdeck shield, and the re-decking itself is scheduled to start in November 2026.

- 3) Update on OSPR activities:
 - a) **Mr. Herrera** reported nothing significant to report.
- 4) California State Lands Commission (CSLC) activities:
 - a) **Justin Wood** commented that the Commission provided input to update its information in the Harbor Safety Plan. **HSC Chairperson Betz** responded that the input had been incorporated in the Plan and thanked the CSLC for their submission.
 - b) **Chairperson Betz** queried whether there were any questions; there were none.
- 5) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) activities:
 - a) **Mr. Kim** reported the Corps is finalizing Environmental Assessment and Plans & Specifications for a dredging contract that will address high spots in the LA River Mouth POLB approach channel of 40,000 – 60,000 cubic yards. The Corps is targeting advertising the contract in June 2026, awarding in July 2026, and beginning construction in September 2026. There will be a contractor vessel conducting sampling in the main channel on 17 April. The Deep Draft Navigation Improvement Project may be in Fiscal Year 2029.
- 6) National Oceanic and Atmospheric (NOAA) activities: **Mr. Jeff Ferguson** was absent and separately reported nothing significant to report. **Capt. Louttit** reported that **Mr. Ferguson** welcomed feedback on the new charts.
- 7) Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) National Steering Team (NST) activities: **Capt. Betz** briefed:
 - a) **Capt. Louttit** and **Capt. Betz** are on the NST.
 - b) The **National Harbor Safety Conference** was last week in Seattle. **Capt. Betz, Capt. Louttit, Capt. Crampton, Capt. Osborne, and Jim Peschel** attended. It was an excellent conference, well attended and well worth the time. Despite no Coast Guard attendees due to the lapse of appropriations, the organizers cleared their waiting list and filled the room with industry and federal agencies such as NOAA. We greatly missed **Ms. Noel Jones, USCG**, who was the primary force behind the conference organization. She was unable to attend due to the government shutdown. The agenda was good, rich, and nationwide, and included such topics as:
 - i) Federal agency perspectives
 - ii) Understanding alternative fuels
 - iii) Advancing shipboard fire safety
 - iv) Fragility of the marine transportation system
 - v) Coordinating exercises
 - vi) Maritime workforce development
 - vii) Leveraging existing Safety Campaigns (such as already posting the American Waterways Operators video on our web site)
 - viii) Lessons learned from the Francis Scott Key Bridge Allision and Collapse
 - c) The old saying “you’ve seen one port, you’ve seen one port” is still valid, but the next sentence should be “but there are commonalities we can learn from and share.” For example, **Captain Betz** stated he feels very comfortable with the line we draw between what our HSC

covers and what the AMSC (Area Maritime Security Committee) covers, with the Captain of the Port, **Capt. Louttit**, **Capt. Betz**, and others attending both to ensure cross-coordination between safety and security. Some other HSCs around the country also merge the two. Even though ports are different, there is opportunity to share information between HSCs, which is a positive trend in our HSC and others.

- d) We're fortunate. In California, our HSCs are established by law and overseen by OSPR. OSPR funds the Marine Exchange to perform the Secretary function, and we have two willing ports who provide meeting venues at no charge. This situation eliminates many of the challenges many of the other 30 HSCs in the nation grapple with.
 - e) In LA/LB we do a lot of the right things right and it's an honor to do it with you!
- 8) **Chairperson Betz** queried whether there was any more Old Business; there was none.

ITEM III - NEW BUSINESS:

1) Sub-Committee Reports:

- a) S/C #1 (Navigation Safety) – **Capt. McCaughey** reported the Subcommittee met twice since the last HSC meeting will meet at 1330 today at the Marine Exchange.
 - i) Old SC-1 Business:
 - (1) The **ATB workgroup** continues to work towards new proposed language in the ATB/Tanker regulations for both LA/LB and San Francisco. Members of the group met again with OSPR's legal team on 26 March to finalize the structure and proposed language in the new regulation. The group is scheduled to meet again on 9 April to review the final changes. If successful the language will be brought before Sub-Committee #1 in May, then, if approved, will go before the full Committee in June for approval. If approved before the full committee it will be sent to OSPR for final approval into law.
 - (2) **Autonomous Vessels:** The Sub-Committee has been discussing autonomous vessels in recent months and will continue to be on our agenda every month due to the rapid increase in activity. These autonomous vessels are large vessels of 180 foot to smaller 11-foot vessels. The Sub-Committee will continue to work proactively with the Coast Guard to create bare minimum standards or best practices for autonomous vessels to maintain safe navigation within the LA/LB complex. The committee will monitor Coast Guard Southwest District's work group regarding these vessels and any recommendations they may have.
 - (3) **Francis Scott Key Bridge incident:** The Sub-Committee discussed the directive from the Harbor Safety Committee National Steering Team regarding our communication protocols (Harbor Safety Plan – Chapter 10) when a vessel emergency could pose an immediate risk to critical shoreside infrastructure. After discussing it, committee believes that the Ports of LA/LB currently have very good mitigation measures with regards to piloting vessels and emergency communication protocols, however, we did produce some suggestions to consider including:
 - (a) Recommend blowing the ships whistle (Danger signal) to gain attention.

(b) Putting out a Mayday call on channel 16 to alert first responders and other key players in the port.

ii) New SC-1 Business:

(1) At this afternoon's meeting, the Sub-Committee will continue the discussion on Autonomous vessels activity, discuss Container ship operations with vessels alongside relating to the Pier G incident, and continue review of the Harbor Safety Plan. So far, all changes have been non-substantive in nature that do not change the way we operate, and thus will not be required to go before the full committee for approval.

2) Chairperson Betz queried whether there were any questions or other new business; there was none.

ITEM IV – PUBLIC COMMENTS

1) **Chairperson Betz** queried whether there were any members of the public present in the room or attending virtually who wanted to ask a question or make public comment. There were none.

ITEM V - ADJOURNMENT:

1) **Chairperson Betz** briefed that the next meeting of the HSC will be held in person with hybrid/virtual option Wednesday 3 June at 10:00 AM at the Port of Los Angeles Banning's Landing facility.

2) There being no further business, **Chairperson Betz** made a motion, seconded by **Capt. White**, and the meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

3) **Chairperson Betz** thanked the Audio-Visual Staff for setting everything up.

Very respectfully submitted,

//signed// J.K. Louttit
Captain J. Kipling (Kip) Louttit
Executive Secretary
13 May 2026

LA/LB HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING #207, 1 APRIL 2026

If currently LA/LB HSC Member, Alternate, or listed in Roster

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Virtual Attendees HSC LA-LB #207, 1 APR 2026

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Cronin, Sean

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