XI. VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE

A. Background Review: VTS LA-LB is a Public/Private partnership vessel traffic service for the Ports of LA/LB. VTS is jointly operated and managed by the Marine Exchange of Southern California, (a nonprofit corporation) and the Coast Guard COTP. VTS is a cooperative effort of the State of California, U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Exchange of Southern California, Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and under the authority of California Government Code, Section 8670.21, Harbors and Navigation Code, Sections 445-449.5 and the port tariffs of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Established March 1, 1994, VTS has made our ports safer, cleaner and more efficient. Local control of VTS operations, procedures, fees and scope rests with the maritime industry and port authorities. VTS has proven to be a valuable asset to the port complex, which is today one of the safest and most successful in the world.

B. Operational Review: Since its establishment, the VTS has covered over 800,000 successful vessel transits within the VTS area of responsibility. In addition to monitoring thousands of small recreational, passenger and fishing vessels not required to participate.

On January 1, 1997, Assembly Bill 748 increased the VTS area of responsibility to a 25-mile radius from PT Fermin, including Santa Monica Bay. VTS now oversees tank vessel movements at the El Segundo offshore moorings and anchorage's and significant commercial and recreational vessel traffic from Marina Del Rey and King Harbors.

Assembly Bill 748 also redefined covered vessels, mirroring state and federal VTS regulations and procedures. VTS LA-LB follows the same policies, procedures, and regulations outlined in the VTS National Standards for Operation for all Vessel Traffic Services in the United States. See Appendix B for the latest revision of the VTS User Manual.

A Vessel Traffic Management System is in effect within the Los Angeles /Long Beach Harbor and approaches, extending to 25 nautical miles seaward of Pt. Fermin. This system is comprised of three sectors. Within each sector is a Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) with watchstanders that monitor and report traffic information within their sector and coordinate traffic movements across sector boundaries.

Los Angeles Pilot Service for POLA and Jacobsen Pilot Service for POLB coordinate vessel traffic management inside the federal breakwater. Responsibility for vessel traffic monitoring and management passes to/from VTS and the appropriate pilot organization at the two breakwater openings, Angels Gate for POLA and Queens Gate for POLB. Similar electronic tracking equipment at both pilot stations creates a seamless system of vessel traffic management with VTS. Another key component of this system has vessels contact VTS 15 minutes before leaving the breakwater on outbound transits; and contact the pilot station 15 minutes before entering the traffic management system inside the breakwater.

C. Partnership with the Coast Guard COTP: VTS employs state-of-the-art tracking and communications equipment, including a unique replay device for demonstration/archive of all

incident data. Coast Guard COTP personnel analyze this data for waterways management issues that arise. It is this vital data that supports change and enforces standards to Federal/RNA regulations, Rules of the Road, and good marine practices. COTP issues Letters of Concern or Letters of Warning as appropriate. In more severe instances, the Coast Guard may order full investigations and ascribe penalties and fines to the Master and/or Vessel Owner/Operator.

D. VTS also provides significant services to the Coast Guard in other waterways management mission areas, such as:

1. Better targeting and scheduling of vessel inspections, compliance with Notice of Arrival (NOA) requirements;

2. Queuing inbound commercial vessels by using vessel arrival and port call information, and coordination with both pilot organizations, thereby minimizing potential close quarters situations and confusion in the vicinity of the pilot boarding and precautionary areas;

3. Identifying vessels involved in incidents and referring them to the Coast Guard for boarding. Incidents include communications problems, erratic maneuvers, mechanical failures, violations of rules and regulations, improper navigation, or excessive speed, etc.;

4. Providing an incident report database. The Coast Guard analyzes trends and occurrences and shares them with mariners. This has sparked national interest and instituted navigation safety improvements. Some of these improvements include; increased Pilot coverage for inter port shifts, updated Limited Visibility Guidelines, increased RNA effectiveness through practical applications, and diverting to outside anchorage vessels with serious mechanical deficiencies (i.e., Propulsion loss, steering gear failure, etc.).

5. Developing a database of mechanical failures. A summary of this information can be found in Chapter VII History of Accidents. In addition to operational procedures developed to address safe movements, the Coast Guard can identify additional trends and data, and refocus design, maintenance and/or testing procedures aboard vessels.

6. Monitoring and managing all vessels at the anchorage (Golf, Foxtrot, Huntington Beach, El Segundo, and Avalon Harbor) and supporting COTP orders restricting the movement of detained vessels.