

## A STATEMENT FROM DAVID E. POHORYLO REGARDING SB 241

My name is David Pohorylo, I reside in Monroe, Connecticut. I am a commercial maritime Professional, and have been in the industry for 47 years. I founded New England Shipping, a Connecticut headquartered Ship Management and Agency Company, in 1992. I am chairman of the Connecticut Maritime Coalition, a Connecticut Cluster Organization, who members are the maritime stakeholders doing business in our three deep water ports. I am a Connecticut State Pilot Commissioner and I am a board member of the Connecticut Port Authority.

Maritime in Connecticut was housed in the Connecticut Department of Transportation since its inception. It was never given any budget, it was never considered a priority, it was neglected for over 75 years. This neglect led to the collapse of sections of the State Pier in New London, and thousands of tons of newly discharge cargo setting on the ocean floor. This led to the reluctant spending of tens of millions of dollars to rebuild the pier in the late 90's and early 2000's. To me nothing sums up the DOT's attitude to maritime than former Commissioner James Rediker's opening statement at the first meeting of the Connecticut Port Authority Working Group "I don't know anything about maritime and I can't wait to get it out of my department".

The Connecticut Maritime Coalition tried to change the status quo by working for the creation of the Connecticut Maritime Commission in the early 2000's to represent Connecticut's ports, outside of the DOT, either under OPM or DECD. Ultimately, the bill creating it was changed at the last hour making it an advisory commission to the DOT just before it was passed. The Connecticut Maritime Commission had no accomplishments during its existence. We then knew the only solution to promote our three great assets, our deep water ports in New Haven, Bridgeport and New London was to create what all other states with deep water port have and support, a port authority. We worked several years on the task, and with the help of Senator Andy Maynard, co-chair of the transportation committee at the time, came up with a bill to create the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) to promote and market Connecticut's three deep water ports to create economic growth and jobs not only in the ports but throughout the state. The legislature wisely unanimously passed the bill.

So, what went wrong. Senator Maynard's unfortunate accident led to his absence prior to the passing of an implementing bill, and then in my opinion everything got out of control. A port authority is a commercially orientated operation, not a political one. We got a political one. A board made up with 15 members, and in our case, only two members that had any knowledge of the commercial maritime industry. It was Chaired and Vice Chaired by individuals, politically orientated with no real knowledge or understanding of what a Port Authority was. Their only concern was with the appearance of the CPA to the legislature, and not at all concerned with the business at hand, our three deep water ports, an asset any state would love to have. I have no doubt that had led to many ethical problems that ensued.

So how can this be fixed, as we cannot once again neglect these three great assets. Transfer it back under the DOT? That would be a fatal mistake. The CPA now has a new extremely competent Executive Director and a Chair and Vice Chair that can get the job done. I seriously think the CPA is now starting to function as it should, but changes have to be made. It needs a smaller board, with members with extensive experience in the commercial maritime industry. We have thousands of qualified people in Connecticut, Fairfield county is home the largest number of maritime related companies in the United States. We also need board members that are professions in the banking and insurance industries, and we have many in our state. Let the CPA function as a port authority should, not as it had, and I see no reason that it would not be a success. Our three great assets cannot be neglected again, the people of Connecticut deserve better than that.