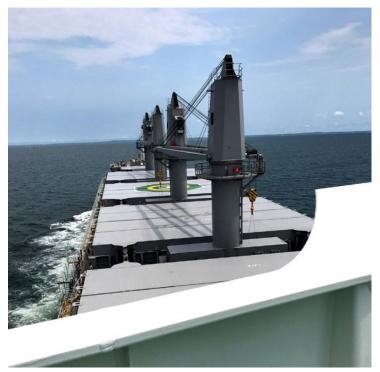
Deep Water Port notes

The News Portfolio of The Connecticut Deep Water Port Community

New London . New Haven . Bridgeport

Ports Report

By Donald B. Frost





M/V LISSA TOPIC (LOA 623 Feet, Draft 35 Feet) outbound from Gateway Terminal New Haven heading for Turkey with loaded scrap metal, piloted by Sean Meade.

Photo by Senior CT Pilot Charlie Jonas.

Part of the title of last month's NAMEPA event in Houston caught my eye. The call to "Create Order Out of Chaos" is not limited to the seagoing part of the maritime Industry. The shoreside part of the chaos has been struggling with the growth in ship sizes for quite a while. Borrowing a phrase from an old friend, Mr. Bill Gray, "What do you do when Ships Get Too Big for Their Ditches?" The answer has been DREDGE, but the costs (plural- it is not just the draft that must be accommodated) to safely berth, load and discharge these mega ships. The port expansion costs are competing with the cumulative freight savings created by their economies of scale.

While the ships get bigger Port Directors and planners have to consider whether the recent slowdown in international trade is a long-term issue or just a function of uncertainty about trade wars, trade policies and tariffs. Strategic Planning is often mentioned, but as we know, most plans have little to do with strategy. They are meant to be a pathway toward better performance, but there are only two ways to get that: Invent or exploit something new in your environment. However, for ports, they don't come along in nice packages so strategy work is episodic.

The "something new" for certain ports between New York and Massachusetts is offshore wind farms. It is a new market and investment in this sector promises to bring welcome revenues to the states and localities. However, the delivered price to the rate payers for this electricity will be very expensive. Besides the capital and finance costs for the wind turbines, their installation, maintenance and repair (see footnotes), and a fleet of specially designed service vessels, there are also significant costs to build a network of underwater cables and infrastructure connecting them to the Grid. Then there are the unseen costs of tolling and tithing by local political structures before you pay taxes on the actual electricity used.

High on the list of reasons why manufacturing left New England in the 20th Century was (still is) the high cost of energy here. Will the remaining manufacturing sector in New England stay here or seek locations with cheaper electricity produced by low cost solar and natural gas? If you look at a map you will see the optimal manufacturing locations with low electricity costs also have more modern and robust transportation infrastructures, and are often closer to the populations that buy their products.

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I am not the only observer that sees a slowing of globalization, as we know it today, and the impact on manufacturing. I know that US Gross Domestic Product continues to grow, but if you look carefully the growth in the services sector is growing faster than in manufacturing. If this trend continues ports should take a deeper look into their future.

The word "port" is defined as a place where ships load or unload cargo or passengers and the word portal is defined as a door, gate or entrance through which cargo or people pass. Today's post-industrial era emphasizes movement over place. The age of Just In Time Inventory is meeting the age of AMAZON Prime. Ports must recognize the ongoing changes in cargo volume, demand for speedy movement, as well as where and how the cargo interfaces with other transportation modes. Planners, ports and carriers have to look at the cargo, its purpose, its customers or consumers and the entire transportation SYSTEM to be used.

System time saved is not just a function of terminal and labor costs. Although they both still have a part in the 21st Century logistics system, it is not a 19-20th Century size part. Intermodal transfer time

and costs are critical, but not only to the shippers/receivers. Also, do you remember the thousands of empty sea containers stacked along the rail corridor serving Ports Elizabeth and Newark and the complaints about that sight and the road congestion? Shippers leaving loaded containers at satellite terminals/ports as free in-transit warehousing create eye-sores as well as a feeling of insecurity. If the US Dept of Transportation/Maritime Administration's Marine Highway program is to succeed these issues must be addressed.

Footnotes: From the Daily Caller June 5, 2018

- 1. New England residents pay more than 6 times (this figure has not been verified) the market price for electricity
- 2. Maryland's residents will pay an additional \$2 billion in increased electricity rates to support two wind energy projects in the planning.
- 3. In February 2018 it was reported that Danish wind operator Orsted must repair 600 wind turbines due to early blade failure. The blades must be brought ashore for repair after only five years of operation at a cost of over \$100 million.
- 4. Last September Hurricane MARIA (Category 4 storm) destroyed the land based wind turbines on the island of Puerto Rico.

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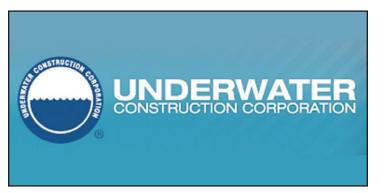
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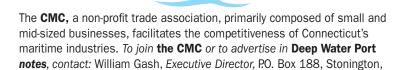
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