

Thanks for sending this along! We have incorporated these questions into our Questions for the Record for Admiral Allen. Hope this helps us get some answers!

***-Jeff Watters
Aide to Senator Cantwell***

Thursday, March 20, 2008

To: Jeff Waters and the Honorable Senator Cantwell

Thank you for your attention to the Maritime issues facing our Country today. The primary question from our Master of Towing Vessels Association is in regard to proposal USCG-2006-26202. Why would the USCG consider such a drastic reduction in training requirements for Towing Vessels? Our questions are as follows:

1. Has the value of sea time, and the experience that goes with it, become diminished in the eyes of the Coast Guard, the maritime educators, and the industry's leaders?
2. Where did anyone get the idea that a fully-qualified Mate of a Towing Vessel, for use in a 2-watch system, can be produced in 30 days?

(For comparison: using the current USCG route into a licensed Deck Officer's position in the towing industry, it takes the following periods of time, (working 182 days a year), to be eligible to sit for the exam for Apprentice Mate, or advance to Mate & Captain (with no further testing).

A total of 2 years is required to advance to Apprentice Mate of Towing Vessels.

A total of 3 years & 4 months is required to advance to Mate of Towing Vessels.

A total of 5 years & 4 months is required to advance to Master of Towing Vessels.)

3. When and how did 5 years and 4 months become an ***unacceptably long*** period of time for positions of such responsibility, and requiring considerable skill and experience?
4. What potential hazards were considered when 5 years and 4 months of training on a Towing Vessel were required and have these hazards evaporated from the Industry?

Master of Towing Vessels Association