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California Gov. Jerry Brown Praised for Signing Bill to Enhance Pilot Safety in San Francisco Bay and River System

(San Francisco, CA) – The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA), which represents ocean carriers and marine terminal operators conducting business at West Coast ports, today applauded Gov. Jerry Brown for signing legislation that will reinforce and strengthen the state’s continued promotion and provision of safe navigation in the San Francisco Bay and River system and Monterey Bay.

“We are very pleased that Governor Brown continues to help support safe navigation and commerce at our state ports,” said Mike Jacob, PMSA vice president. “Improving the safety of our state pilotage system is a win-win for California, it protects the environment and our maritime economy without any cost to taxpayers.”

Senate Bill 1408 (Blakeslee) requires enhanced safety and accountability in the state’s oversight of its licensed bar pilots -- those who guide cargo ships and other vessels in and out of the San Francisco Bay. Among other basic accident prevention strategies, the legislation strengthens environmental protections and navigational safety by directing the state Board of Pilot Commissioners to establish enforceable rest periods and hours of service, make explicit basic drug and alcohol prohibitions, and require the Board of Pilot Commissioners to be notified of pilot DUIs.

California already has a surcharge and fee framework that requires ocean carriers who use pilot services to pay for virtually all costs associated with the work of the bar pilots and the Pilot Commission. Any additional expenses related to this legislation will likewise be passed on to the ocean-going vessels that use state pilotage services.

SB 1408 was supported by PMSA, a coalition of supply chain businesses and maritime interests, and several marine and environmental organizations including the Ocean Conservancy, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and Save the Bay.

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Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

PMSA is a nonprofit, independent trade association representing marine terminal operators and ocean carriers operating U.S. and foreign-flagged cargo and passenger vessels engaged in trade at U.S. West Coast ports. The association maintains offices in Long Beach, San Francisco and Seattle.