



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 4, 2021

Contact: John McLaurin  
jmclaurin@pmsaship.com  
925-786-3768

**STATEMENT BY JOHN MCLAURIN, PRESIDENT OF THE PACIFIC MERCHANT SHIPPING ASSOCIATION (PMSA), REGARDING CONGESTION IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN**

“Due to the pandemic, the entire supply chain is experiencing unprecedented problems that have contributed to a delay in goods reaching retail operations and consumers. After cargo volumes crashed in the spring at the start of the pandemic, cargo volumes have now been squeezed into the last remaining months of 2020. The pandemic surge has marine terminals taking extraordinary actions to keep cargo flowing.

“To do our part, marine terminals have opened additional gates to allow more trucks inside the terminal and increase throughput. Marine terminals have also increased hours of operation to allow trucking companies greater access at night and on the weekends. And terminals have leased land outside the ports to create more room to ease congestion on dockside terminals.

“Despite the efforts by all sectors of the supply chain, the pandemic continues to dramatically impact on the goods movement system in California and nationally. U.S. imports, normally spread throughout the year, have been packed into the second half of the year. Normally, the holiday supplies start arriving as early as July, but with the delayed ordering and offshore manufacturing, goods began arriving in higher numbers later in the season. This shortened, concentrated resupply period, more than any other factor, has caused problems throughout the goods movement system.

“The pandemic also impacted the availability of critical workers throughout the supply chain, including those working at the ports, railroads, trucking companies, warehouses, and retail locations. Workers contracting the virus, mandatory quarantines and sanitizing equipment and work sites impacted the ability of system to respond to a record influx of goods. Missed appointments by trucking companies continue to sap capacity in the supply chain, reducing opportunities for cargo to move from terminals to warehouses. Railcar availability is also strained, which is contributing to the inability to clear out the older containers in a timely manner to make room for new containers sitting on the ships that are waiting to unload.

“The pandemic also created equipment problems as retail and warehouse locations are under limited operations leading to delays in returning needed chassis to the ports. Delays in returning chassis have doubled, resulting in, marine terminals unable to move containers out of terminals and make room for new containers.

“Relieving the congestion will require every part of the supply chain working together. Cargo owners must expedite their ordering for pick-up of containers, warehouses and distribution centers must open to accept containers and quickly return equipment, and trucking and rail must increase their capacity to move containers out of the ports.”

# # #

**About the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA). The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) is an independent, not-for-profit association focused on global trade. PMSA operates offices in Oakland, Long Beach and Seattle, and represents owners and operators of marine terminals and U.S. and foreign vessels operating throughout the world.**