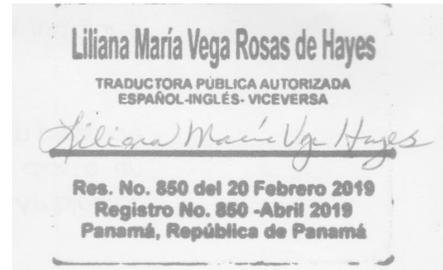




Panama, 25 August 2020

Architect Noriel Araúz
Minister of Maritime Affairs
Director of the Maritime Authority of Panama, AMP



Subject: Request for information about the handling of hydrocarbons, bilge water, and other spills in the maritime environment of the Republic of Panama.

Dear Mr. Araúz:

As a result of the incident that took place in the early morning hours on 30 June 2020, involving the Sea Lion barge at PSA Port in the former Rodman base, and of several reports received by our organization throughout the current year, of the possible dumping of hydrocarbons in the Bay of Panama and the area of La Boca, our organization has decided to investigate the handling of the before mentioned.

For two months, we have been collecting information and interviewing several stakeholders with the local maritime sector to evaluate the handling of spills, and thus be able to state an educated opinion on the topic. This effort seeks to educate our members and the public at large; and to explore whether potential adjustments or improvements to the current system should be implemented.

For the time being, we have historical data information on incidents and information compiled from OMI/SOLAS/MARPOL regulations and procedures, which have been provided to us, and which we found on the website of the AMP.

Our investigation encompasses the following governmental agencies: Maritime Authority of Panama; Ministry of the Environment; National Civil Protection System; Panama Canal Authority; Firefighters' Corps of Panama, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Members of the maritime sector and civil society who are interested in the protection of the coastal marine environment will also be consulted.

In view of the foregoing, we formally request the following information:

1. Current procedure of the AMP for handling spills, along with the revision period for it.
2. Established capacity; list of the equipment available at the AMP or other state institutions to perform this task: Number of vessels, spill booms, skimmers, and others. Is there an inventory of consolidated equipment available, in the case of a larger spill?
3. A table containing information on the number of personnel qualified to perform these duties within the AMP. What are the required qualifications, and what is the recertification period?
4. Budget assigned for these incidents in the last five years and its execution with respect to equipment and training. Current budget associated with it and its execution to date.

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5. Agreements signed with other countries, the private sector, or other stakeholders who are relevant in these cases.
6. Crisis procedure for a more serious event.

The case along the Mamicio coastline involving the Japanese vessel MV Wakashio highlights the importance of having robust contingency plans and procedures that anticipate damage to the environment. There was talk in previous months of a new terminal on Boná Island in the Pacific. There is also talk about a new terminal in the area of the Bay of Las Minas in Colón. This potential growth in operations increases the current risk level of spills in the national territory, which is why we consider it important to raise the level of awareness about them.

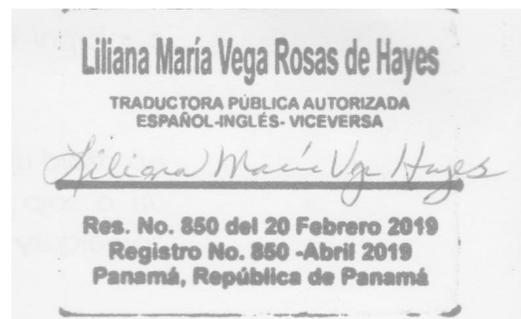
The reply to this letter may be sent to the email address fundación_promar@yahoo.com and we can also be reached at cell phone number 6673-9251.

Truly yours,



Ricardo Wong D.
President
Fundación para la Protección del Mar - PRO-MAR

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