

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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*HAFNIA AMESSI* TANKER ALLISION WITH

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PIER BRAVO ON THE COOPER RIVER,

\*

AT JOINT BASE CHARLESTON

NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

\*

ON JANUARY 14, 2024

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Interview of: JOHN CAMERON, Executive Director

Charleston Branch Pilots Association

Charleston Branch Pilots  
 Association  
 Charleston, South Carolina

Wednesday,  
 January 17, 2024

## APPEARANCES:

LT [REDACTED], Senior Investigating Officer  
US Coast Guard, Sector Charleston

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

AMY PAGE, Chair  
Commissioners of Pilotage

SEAN HOUSEAL, ESQ.  
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Counsel for Owners of the Vessel

CAPT DOUGLAS LOGAN  
Charleston Pilots

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CRAYTON WALTERS, President  
Charleston Branch Pilots Association

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:36 p.m.)

LT [REDACTED]: Good afternoon. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Coast Guard, Sector Charleston. It is January 17th,  
2024, 1336.

And we are here at the Charleston Pilots Association office  
interviewing Mr. John Cameron in regards to the incident that  
occurred on January 14th, with the *Hafnia Amessi* and Pier Bravo  
allision on the Cooper River.

And we will go around and do introductions of all parties.

MR. HOUSEAL: I guess I'll start. Sean Houseal, a lawyer  
with Womble Bond Dickinson here on behalf of the vessel interests.

MS. PAGE: I'm Amy Page. I'm the chair of the Commission.

CAPT LOGAN: Douglas Logan, Charleston Pilots.

MR. GILSENAN: Ryan Gilsenan, counsel for Captain Logan.

MR. CAMERON: John Cameron, C-a-m-e-r-o-n, Executive Director  
of Charleston Pilots, and I'm here as the witness.

CAPT WALTERS: Crayton Walters, C-r-a-y-t-o-n, Walters,  
president of the Charleston Branch Pilots Association.

MR. EHLERS: Andrew Ehlers, National Transportation Safety  
Board, investigator-in-charge.

LT [REDACTED]: All right. That concludes the introductions.

## INTERVIEW OF JOHN CAMERON

BY LT [REDACTED]:

Q. So, Mr. Cameron, I will open it up to you. I guess first

1 off, just explain what your role is here at the Pilots  
2 Association, with the commissioners and what you do here in the  
3 port.

4 A. Sure. Thank you. I am the executive director of the  
5 Charleston Branch Pilots Association and have other titles with  
6 their subsidiary companies. So Charleston Navigation Company,  
7 Southeast Ocean Response and so forth. My job description is very  
8 vague and very brief, and it -- but in general as I recall, it's  
9 to look out for the interests of the pilots. My background, I  
10 spent 24 years in the Coast Guard. I retired as a captain of the  
11 port here and, you know, my area of expertise is regulatory and  
12 port operations matters. So I generally apply that expertise to  
13 the best interests of the pilots.

14 I've served on the Area Maritime Security Committee as the  
15 pilots representative, on the Harbor Safety Committee. I'm active  
16 -- I'm on the board of directors of the Maritime Association and  
17 the Propeller Club. And so anyway, you know, I have a general  
18 role as the executive director, you know, to manage the company.  
19 I don't supervise pilots. I don't advise pilots. I provide  
20 pilots information and, you know, that's a big part of my role.

21 Q. Okay. Could you clarify -- I know you said you don't  
22 supervise the pilots. Clarify like how that relationship works  
23 between the pilot and the Charleston Branch Pilots Association and  
24 the pilot commissioners. Because from like my understanding, like  
25 the pilots are basically contractors. They're not really like

1 your employees. Like just guide us a little bit more about how  
2 that relationship works.

3 A. Sure. The Charleston Branch Pilots Association is an  
4 association of all of the pilots licensed by the state of South  
5 Carolina. And they individually take an oath to provide pilotage  
6 to vessels that, you know, that request pilotage or for which  
7 pilotage is compulsory under the state licensure. And/or part of  
8 their oath is or I will assure myself that someone else duly  
9 qualified and licensed goes in my place.

10 The Commissioners of Pilotage are responsible for setting the  
11 regulations that the pilots operate under, operating procedures,  
12 licensing procedures, training procedures and whatnot.

13 So as an employee of the pilots, technically I'm an employee  
14 of all 20 of them. They are organized such that there is a board  
15 of directors and a president. So I report most directly to the  
16 president, Captain Crayton Walters. But, really I work for all 20  
17 pilots to again, you know, manage their interests as pilots.

18 One of those interests is, of course, complying with all  
19 commission directives and commission oversight. I do have a  
20 concurrent role with the commission and I am a consultant to the  
21 commission. So at commission meetings, I actually don't work for  
22 the pilots at the meetings. I work for the commission, and I  
23 advise them on really interpreting maritime matters. The  
24 commissioners aren't necessarily maritime experts. So that's a  
25 side position. But, you know, there are many routine aspects to

1 what I do for the pilots, and then there are many ad hoc aspects  
2 depending on what comes up.

3 But one of the roles that is routine is reviewing and  
4 collecting sounding information that comes from the Army Corps and  
5 disseminated to the pilots, and they're making that as seamless as  
6 possible. But, there is many other ways that I monitor things  
7 that are going on in the harbor, you know, aid to navigation  
8 issues and dredging projects and whatnot and, you know, apprise  
9 the pilots of, you know, anything that might affect their, you  
10 know, their piloting.

11 Q. Okay. In all the discussions we've had of late, obviously  
12 we've identified that there's issues with shoaling in the Joint  
13 Base Charleston channel region. Can you just talk about the  
14 history of that in terms of like your knowledge of it and how the  
15 pilots have handled it in the past and then maybe just a timeline  
16 of how it's been handled since the *Bow Triumph* incident happened  
17 in 2022, like up until now. I know that's a lot.

18 A. Sure.

19 Q. But that's basically what we're focusing on.

20 A. Sure. I'll try and be brief. But, in the last 15 years,  
21 we've come a long way with the Army Corps as far as them providing  
22 sounding information and doing so in a manner that's useful. You  
23 know, when I started working here, the Army Corps would call us up  
24 and say, hey, if you want to see the soundings, you can come by  
25 and pick them up. And I'd go over there and pick up a chart the

1 size of that that would cover maybe a mile of channel and get a  
2 whole set of those, and there'd be tiny little numbers and we'd  
3 put them countertop table and I'd let the pilots know, hey,  
4 there's a new set of soundings. And, you know, in theory you're  
5 supposed to come in here and look at every little number and look  
6 for bad one, and I would highlight some of them.

7 The Army Corps knew that that was, you know, not all that  
8 functional, and they started providing color coded sets but they  
9 would still email them in PDF because there was no way to  
10 integrate them with our software that we used to navigate.

11 So, we started using portable pilot units in 2015 maybe,  
12 2017.

13 CAPT LOGAN: Well, we used a different version earlier.

14 MR. CAMERON: Yeah, but when did we go -- when did we first  
15 start with electronics.

16 CAPT LOGAN: It was a lot earlier than that. It was probably  
17 in I want to say 2005, 2006.

18 MR. CAMERON: Okay.

19 CAPT LOGAN: Because we started with Bluetooth sending units  
20 from the pilot plug, but as far as the ones that incorporated rate  
21 of turn, the sophisticated ones we have now, we've been using --  
22 Crayton, what do you think? About 10 years.

23 CAPT WALTERS: Yeah.

24 MR. CAMERON: Okay. So at that point the goal was to try to  
25 get the sounding information onto the pilot's units so that they



1 had it displayed while they were navigating. And, that has  
2 evolved pretty recently really. The Army Corps' eHydro site came  
3 online, I want to say 3 years ago, and there's an easy process now  
4 that happened probably just before the first incident, but anyway,  
5 the files are called XYZ files, and that's really what they are,  
6 you know, three dimensional numbers. And, we can download those  
7 from eHydro and I can post them to our enterprise account that  
8 comes with the software that the pilots use to navigate. SEAIq is  
9 the name of the software. So I post files to SEAIq that I get  
10 from eHydro and those files download straight into the pilots'  
11 units when they're in WiFi coverage. And -- anyway, so that's how  
12 far we've come. You know, along the way, like I said, we went  
13 through different color coding. We had many meetings with the  
14 Army Corps over the years about does this color coding work. You  
15 have like contours. And then we get into the electronics of it.

16 We had issues with, you know, they'd do a set of the harbor  
17 and then they'd do another set but there would be an overlap and  
18 we had numbers on top of numbers, and that probably took a year to  
19 sort out, you know, a software fix for that between our software  
20 provider, SEAIq and, you know, the format that the Army Corps was  
21 using. So there was a lot of, you know, details and steps to work  
22 out to get to where we are now. But it works quite well now, and  
23 it was, you know, I'm sure we'll talk about what's changed since  
24 the first incident. There have been some improvements since then,  
25 too. Do you want me to go into those?

1 LT [REDACTED]: Sure.

2 MR. CAMERON: So largely I'm going to refer to an email that  
3 I sent to Captain Mike Karr on January 3rd which asks, you know, a  
4 similar question. What have we done differently since the first  
5 incident?

6 So, it was in that timeframe that I made it a regular  
7 practice every week of going eHydro, and the Notice to Mariners  
8 comes out on Wednesdays. So Wednesdays I read the Notice to  
9 Mariners and I go to eHydro.

10 There are two pilots, the Pilots Association Navigation  
11 Technology Committee and since the *Bow Triumph* incident, that  
12 committee met and one of the topics was what -- well, it's met  
13 several times, and one of the topics was how do we backstop me?  
14 How do we make sure there's no single point of failure that I  
15 don't do it that week, I miss something or whatever.

16 So one of the pilots on the Nav Tech Committee, you know,  
17 follows up behind me periodically to make sure that, you know, I  
18 haven't missed something. So that's a new internal practice.

19 BY LT [REDACTED]:

20 Q. What committee was that?

21 A. Navigation Technology.

22 Q. Okay. And that's something internal to Pilots.

23 A. Yes. Two pilots are a member of that. The practice of  
24 uploading our enterprise account -- you know, when I think about  
25 it, that did happen since the *Bow Triumph*. Certainly we were

1 motivated to continue to improve, you know, getting that  
2 information out to the pilots, but it's the, you know, the  
3 capability I think came about for us to do that since then. So  
4 that's new since the *Bow Triumph*.

5 So also every week, this is new since the *Bow Triumph*, when I  
6 read the Notice To Mariners and check the, check the eHydro for  
7 new soundings, I also put in a weekly nav brief to the pilots,  
8 hey, there are new soundings. You'll get a prompt to update. So  
9 they, you know, it's not necessarily just passive. It's also  
10 active. We've tested it with all the pilots to make sure that,  
11 you know, they're able to receive the files and when a new file  
12 comes in, it erases an old file for the same area of the harbor.  
13 So we don't have, you know, conflicts of new and old data.

14 Also since the *Bow Triumph*, SEAiq, beta tested with us and a  
15 couple of other groups, their software solution to overlapping  
16 soundings. So we tested, we tested that here, and it works quite  
17 well, and we helped them come up with a range of, you know, how  
18 far it looks. So the software looks at a number here or looks at  
19 a number here, and decides which one is older, how far do you  
20 look? That range -- that sweet spot seems to be 50 yards. So  
21 that some input we had, and they actually let us set that. So we,  
22 you know, we used 50 yards for that. So anyway, that's -- I just  
23 bring that up as part of the evolution that's happened pretty  
24 recently.

25 Having said all that, Joint Base Charleston's not on eHydro.

1 So, what we've done since the *Bow Triumph* for Joint Base  
2 Charleston soundings is pretty similar to what we've always done  
3 which is ask the Army Corps, hey, is there anything new.  
4 Sometimes they send it to us unprompted, and Jeremy Johnson has  
5 always been a good partner on that. But, we, you know, we didn't  
6 have a process prior to the *Bow Triumph* for how long is too long.  
7 What's, you know, what's our tolerance for an old stale set of  
8 soundings.

9 Since the *Bow Triumph*, you know, as he mentioned in his  
10 testimony, they were getting ready to dredge anyway. And I hadn't  
11 told in Jeremy Johnson's testimony, I had mistakenly thought that  
12 there was a deliberate intent to sound more frequently since the  
13 *Bow Triumph*. What I learned this morning was that just happened  
14 by coincidence. There was a before dredging set and an after  
15 dredging set, and then a set 6 months after dredging which is as  
16 he said is their normal practice. So all three of those have come  
17 since the *Bow Triumph*, one immediately after which I thought was  
18 responsive to the incident, but I think now it was a before dredge  
19 survey for the contract. One came in January of 2023, which again  
20 I thought was proactive in response to the incident, but I think  
21 it might have just been now a post-dredge survey. And then one  
22 came 6 months later in May, which apparently is also their  
23 routine. We didn't have to ask for any of those. Jeremy Johnson  
24 pushed those out to us and not through eHydro but he sent me the  
25 XYZ files by email.

1        So in October, a shipping company asked us if there were any  
2 soundings up that way and that prompted me to realize that, you  
3 know, May was, you know, 5 months ago. And, I asked Jeremy  
4 Johnson by email in October, are there any soundings for Joint  
5 Base Charleston and there weren't. And I asked him again in  
6 December, but a little more pointedly saying, you know, those May  
7 soundings are starting to get a little stale. What's the plan?  
8 He said I'll ask the Army Corps and you call me back I believe it  
9 was a week or 2 later. He said, you know, there's no plans to  
10 dredge or need the sound to survey except for their next deepening  
11 and -- or, I'm sorry, the next maintenance. And I don't recall  
12 him telling me then that that was coming up, you know, this year.  
13 So it was kind of left at, I don't know when they're going to do  
14 another set.

15        You know, and I've asked him many times where is the obstacle  
16 to posting it on eHydro and, you know, you heard his answers this  
17 morning, and that's consistent with what, you know, what he's  
18 always told me.

19        But to stay focused on your question, what have we done since  
20 then. That's all part of it. Let me see -- this -- again, I'm  
21 referring to the email that I sent to Mike Karr, that I think you  
22 already have. Here's a copy of it, Drew.

23        MR. EHLERS: I was going to get it from Mike but --

24        MR. CAMERON: Yeah.

25        MR. EHLERS: All right. Thank you.

1       MR. CAMERON: So, how do we manage what's an appropriate  
2 draft for ships to go to BP? We've reviewed that since the *Bow*  
3 *Triumph*, and there's not a lot we're doing differently. The  
4 pilots monitor under keel clearance. The draft limitations are  
5 actually applicable to inbounds because the vessels always go  
6 loaded and they always leave at least, you know, partially loaded,  
7 but most often in ballast. And so draft from the aspect of under  
8 keel clearance is never an issue outbound.

9       Part of my role here is, I'm the supervisor to the  
10 dispatchers, the dispatchers are the ones that when they take  
11 orders from a vessel look at the draft tables, you know. They  
12 know the draft of the vessel, and they look at the draft tables  
13 and decide whether it can or cannot happen as the agent requested.  
14 So, we have draft tables for all different scenarios and locations  
15 within the harbor, but specifically for the tankers going to  
16 INEOS, you know, we know the choke point for under keel clearance  
17 is also on range Delta but actually a little father up from where  
18 -- the position of Buoy 72A is because that's the area where the  
19 channel necks down from the turning basin to just -- I think it's  
20 a 400 foot wide channel. So that, you know, that tends to drop  
21 the sentiment out of the water. But, anyway, for strict under  
22 keel all the way across the channel, that's our limiting factor.

23       So the pilots will typically come back from a job and say,  
24 hey, I think it's time to re-look at the maximum draft. So back  
25 in July, we -- the directors -- I asked the president, can we put

1 on a director's meeting or could we just review it by email, I  
2 forget which, revising our maximum draft to BP, and in July we did  
3 knock it down from either 31 or 32 feet to 30 feet. And, over the  
4 years, we've gone as low as 29 to my recollection and maybe 28,  
5 but anyway, in that cycle between, you know, maintenance dredging  
6 and, you know, I'm getting further into the cycle before  
7 maintenance dredging, we actively monitor what an appropriate  
8 maximum draft inbound to BP based on the pilots' observations  
9 because that's all we have lacking, you know, regular soundings.  
10 But again, the inbounds where they're deepest, their tracks tend  
11 not to be, you know, in the same location as where they are  
12 outbound setting up for the turn on to range Charlie. So, you  
13 know, we don't have the ability to observe how the shoaling is  
14 progressing. We're seeing it, you know, out in the middle of the  
15 channel, you know, and farther up is where we're focused on.

16 So anyway, I'm part of that process to, you know, take the  
17 feedback from the pilots and, you know, to draw attention to it  
18 and, you know, again provide them the information that they can  
19 use to make their best decision about that. But that's a routine  
20 thing that we're always monitoring here, what is the maximum draft  
21 to get to INEOS. And that really hasn't changed since the *Bow*  
22 *Triumph*. We don't have any new information or new methodology  
23 that we can apply since then, you know, that is because of any new  
24 advances or since the incident.

25 And lastly, there was a National Navigation Technology

1 Conference in Fort Lauderdale in December, and I attended that  
2 coincidentally with Pilot Logan. One of my objectives down there  
3 was to ask the attendees from the Army Corps and from NOAA if  
4 there's similar circumstances to JBC and there definitely are  
5 around the country. Nobody there had direct experience with how  
6 they're managed, but there is a general awareness around the  
7 country of similar problems where DOD has the authorization for  
8 the channel and, you know, it's difficult to get periodic  
9 soundings and then, you know, to get the information out from  
10 that.

11 So that's, you know, that's my involvement in, you know,  
12 trying to make these processes better since the *Bow Triumph*.

13 BY LT [REDACTED]:

14 Q. At that conference down in Florida, did they -- did any  
15 other, you know, ports note any issues that they had had  
16 specifically like marine casualties that they actually had or near  
17 misses that pilots had had that they attribute to this issue?

18 A. Yeah, the agenda for the conference, this kind of issue  
19 wasn't on the agenda for the conference. So all of my discussions  
20 were during the coffee breaks and, no, nobody that I talked to  
21 mentioned that, you know, there were any casualties related to the  
22 lack of transparency on the soundings.

23 Q. Okay. And you mentioned the draft restrictions and that you  
24 all are kind of frequently assessing that and changing that as  
25 needed. In July, I think you said, you all decided, you all



1 decided to lower it to 30 feet from 31 or 32 feet. Is that what  
2 it currently is now?

3 A. I believe so.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yeah. In hindsight, you know, that was about 6 months after  
6 the dredging.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. And, you know, as I mentioned this morning, that's, you know,  
9 that's when the most rapid rate of shoaling occurs.

10 Q. Um-hum. Okay. And, did you say what it was like back at the  
11 time of the *Bow Triumph* or do you recall what it was then?

12 A. I don't, and I actually got tripped up on that in the  
13 exchange with Mike Karr prior to this one. He said, wait a  
14 minute, it's in an email chain with me and Mike that I'm sure you  
15 were copied on.

16 Q. Yeah, I might have that. Yeah, because it was confusion back  
17 and forth.

18 A. Again those maximum drafts are really only applicable on the  
19 inbounds. The outbounds are, you know, never challenged by under  
20 keel clearance, you know, because they're lighter.

21 Q. Because the drafts are usually lower.

22 A. Always lower.

23 Q. Yeah, which is interesting because the two issues that we  
24 have, have been during the outbound transit. So I guess --

25 MR. GILSENAN: That's the only time they're turning that way.

1 LT [REDACTED]: Right.

2 MR. CAMERON: Yeah, that's the only -- the outbound's the  
3 only time that they're over near the, you know, worst of the  
4 shoaling. But that's -- again, I'm not a pilot or advise piloting  
5 routes or piloting activities.

6 BY LT [REDACTED]:

7 Q. So aside from like the draft restrictions and given what you  
8 just said, was there any other like guidance or direction to  
9 pilots from the Association or the Commissioners on like handling  
10 that specific shoal in regards to, I don't know, different tools  
11 to use, to look out for it or using tugs or just maneuvering  
12 different around the shoal? Was that like discussed as a group?

13 A. There definitely were discussions amongst the pilots and I  
14 was asked to, you know, for what I knew about what the  
15 investigation had found, and it certainly was well disseminated  
16 amongst the pilots that the incident happened and that, you know,  
17 the cause of it is, amongst the pilots' opinion, I think it's safe  
18 to say that, you know, all the pilots understood that there was  
19 interaction and, you know, then as in independent pilots, they  
20 were well apprised to take that information into account and, you  
21 know, make the decisions that they thought were appropriate for  
22 the voyages they're assigned to. But I'm not in a role to say,  
23 hey, you know, you need to do this differently or you need to do  
24 this instead of that or you need to do this, too, you know. I'm  
25 not a pilot.

1 Q. Gotcha. If they hire tug escorts or they order tug escorts,  
2 in addition to what may already be there for like the docking  
3 pilot, is that just based on their call or how is that done?

4 A. It is. Each pilot on every job, every day, has the  
5 discretion to have tugs either tethered or untethered or in any  
6 manner they feel, you know, would be prudent. So, you know,  
7 that's -- there doesn't need to be a specific, you know, allowance  
8 for that there. That exists as just a normal, a normal mitigator  
9 if it is necessary.

10 Q. Okay. So it sounds like it was discussed a little bit, there  
11 weren't specific direction or restrictions placed on the pilots,  
12 kind of just giving them their, you know, to use their judgment  
13 and their tools as they best see fit, understanding what happened  
14 with the *Bow Triumph*. So would you say you're confident that all  
15 the pilots understood what caused that incident and what might be  
16 done to avoid it?

17 A. Well, first of all, it was definitely more than a little bit  
18 but, yes, I am confident that all 20 pilots made a very  
19 professional and deliberate interest in learning what was  
20 available, and I do believe that all 20 of them believe that  
21 there's, you know, a potential for interaction there. And that  
22 all 20 of them believe that the lack of information about how that  
23 shoal progresses is, you know, is keeping them from, you know,  
24 having the best information available to, you know, best handle  
25 that, handle that turn.

1        You know, hydrodynamic interaction, you know, you can do  
2 something today and tomorrow, you know, the shoaling has crept  
3 just enough that it's not going to work again, you know, that what  
4 you do today isn't going to work tomorrow. And I don't have any  
5 crystal ball, you know, to help the pilots understand that.

6        And again, piloting is an individual responsibility, and  
7 amongst the pilots or, you know, with me, the expectation of  
8 pilots is to not tell each other how to handle a particular voyage  
9 or how to handle a particular vessel. They're, you know, each  
10 responsible for that. But, you know, I certainly feel like my  
11 role as an employee of the Association is to provide them as much  
12 information as I can gather that would, you know, help them in  
13 their pilotage duties.

14 Q.    Do you think there is an understanding amongst them that if  
15 they navigated downriver further off of that shoal, like keeping a  
16 greater distance from the shoal, that they'd be less likely to  
17 experience hydrodynamic effects from the shoal?

18 A.    Well, you're piloting is a constant risk management exercise,  
19 and where you put the ship, you know, pro and con -- a list of  
20 pros and cons. So I'm certainly not in a position to say that,  
21 you know, while being here might have this particular advantage,  
22 what are the cons to being here at any particular point in any  
23 voyage, you know, starting a turn, completing a turn or just, you  
24 know, maintaining a straight course. You know, the conditions of  
25 a ship, the way a ship handles, different rudders, in that

1 position, the strength of the flood that's going to be encountered  
2 once you get beyond the wing of that point, all of that, goes into  
3 an algorithm that, you know, a pilot has to somehow come up with,  
4 you know, an answer to that is the, you know, optimal margin of  
5 safety. And, it really -- I believe it really is impossible to  
6 prescribe, you know, where to be on a particular voyage just  
7 because you're going from the same point A to the same point B.

8 Q. Okay. I know it's probably, or at least I don't think it's  
9 written in like the Commissioner's policy, but is there like a set  
10 expectation for tools that pilots are supposed to use while  
11 they're sailing, like I mentioned the PPU. Is there anything else  
12 or is it a balance of multiple things or is it just simply based  
13 on the individual pilot's judgment?

14 A. So the Pilotage Commission's regulatory authority over the  
15 practice of piloting all boils down to in the state code, it says  
16 a pilot shall not introduce a hazardous situation to the port. So  
17 that's pretty all encompassing, you know. The Commission offers  
18 guidance that is just guidance on under keel clearance. It offers  
19 guidance on directing the docking pilot, you know, supervising a  
20 docking pilot. It's more supervising than directing. The state  
21 code does say that the pilots can determine the safe parameters of  
22 moving ships. So that's where our draft tables come in, and the  
23 Commission has further guidance that the pilots shall do.

24 There is no guidance from the Commission or regulations from  
25 the state, again the that tell a pilot, you know, where to be on a

1 particular voyage or what safe speed is. And, you know, the  
2 federal regulations that apply in navigable waters include the  
3 rules of the road, and one of those rules, I can't remember the  
4 number right now, says pilots use all available means -- or sorry,  
5 that the vessel use all available means.

6 So there are visual and electronic and, you know, whatever  
7 information is available, again is required to be considered by  
8 the pilot as they go through that constant risk mitigation, you  
9 know, algorithm in their head.

10 Q. Okay. I know I could probably get some data from you on this  
11 but just in your experience and, you know, from your wealth of  
12 knowledge, are there trends that you all are seeing with the  
13 number of ships or the size of ships in terms of length and draft  
14 or tonnage that we're seeing in the upper Cooper?

15 A. Yes. It's kind of fits and starts, INEOS bought BP, I want  
16 to say 2 years ago, we didn't hear anything from them for a while,  
17 and I reached out to them when we -- I think it was the first time  
18 we limited the maximum draft we'd take at their terminal. I just  
19 figured as a courtesy I'd, you know, find out who their new guy is  
20 and call him up and say, hey, we got to do this. And they were  
21 really quite passive about it, okay. And I -- talking on it  
22 though, they did say, well, what do we have to do to get deeper  
23 ships up here. We would like to have deeper ships. And, you  
24 know, I started to talking to them. That's when I first started  
25 talking about you need to advocate for yourselves with the Federal

1 Government and the various factions of it. But I would say since  
2 they told me that, they really again have been very passive on  
3 we've told them, hey, we've got to scale back your maximum draft  
4 and it just -- and they just rolled with it.

5 You know, they're ordering, they're ordering their product  
6 from wherever they get it and somebody's fixing the ships for them  
7 and somebody's telling those, you know, those ships and those  
8 charter agents, you can only load it up to this draft from here on  
9 out. You know, we don't know when it's going to change. They  
10 haven't expressed to us that they're particular aggrieved by any  
11 of that.

12 But to answer you question, they seem to have a goal of, you  
13 know, having deeper drafts more often but we haven't seen that  
14 manifest.

15 As far as the size of ships, I had to research this once and  
16 we -- I know we've brought a 750 foot ship there at one time,  
17 many, many years ago. But, the class of ships that's been going  
18 there for the last several years has been pretty steady, pretty  
19 constant, 20, 30,000 ton range.

20 Q. Okay. So you don't think like the drafts that are -- or the  
21 ships that are going up there has changed considerably in the last  
22 few years?

23 A. Right. It can't because the limitation has been pretty  
24 constant in the last few years. Or, since I've worked here, we've  
25 always been oscillating between 29 and 32 feet.

1 Q. And before INEOS took over BP Amoco, how long had BP Amoco  
2 been there taking ships in?

3 A. Oh, I don't know. I think it's going on 30 years.

4 CAPT WALTERS: At least. I mean in 1988, we were taking  
5 ships in there. It was many years prior to '88. So early '80s.

6 MR. CAMERON: And on the outbounds, I guess -- here's  
7 something I'm ignorant to, I don't know if there's a trend towards  
8 vessels leaving there in ballast or partially loaded. So I don't  
9 know if there's been a difference in the outbound drafts. We could  
10 ask -- you'd probably notice that, right. And I'm not sure that  
11 would be a steady trend if it was such either way anyway. Some  
12 ships -- occasionally a ship will go there and they'll do a  
13 partial load there and then come downriver with a partial load and  
14 off the rest at Odfjell, you know, and sometimes they've, you  
15 know, they've go to sea in ballast because they've offloaded the  
16 entire load at BP, at INEOS.

17 BY LT [REDACTED]:

18 Q. What's the connection between INEOS and Odfjell that they --  
19 like I know the *Bow Triumph* was discharging at both. Is that  
20 normal?

21 MR. GILSENAN: It's normal because they're partial tankers.  
22 So they'll have five different cargos on board, five different  
23 cargo owners, five different destinations.

24 MR. CAMERON: I do think at one time though Odfjell was  
25 chartering non-traditional tankage --



1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It could be.

2 MR. CAMERON: -- because INEOS was full. But anyway. Yeah,  
3 you know, we're here to, we're here to get it all in and out  
4 safely.

5 BY LT [REDACTED]:

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. You know, it's a matter of interest. I try to pay attention  
8 to that stuff but --

9 Q. Yeah, I'm just curious like what you've been seeing.

10 MR. GILSENAN: And that Odfjell tank farm is -- it's a sister  
11 company to the Odfjell steamship line. Like they're obviously  
12 related companies but they're not --

13 LT [REDACTED]: To the Odfjell what?

14 MR. GILSENAN: The shipping company, the ship owner to the  
15 *Bow Triumph* is Odfjell. But it's like a sister company to the  
16 terminal company.

17 LT [REDACTED]: Oh, right.

18 MR. GILSENAN: They're not the same entity, just related.

19 LT [REDACTED]: Okay.

20 BY LT [REDACTED]:

21 Q. And can you speak to the other facilities that are up there?  
22 So there's, you know, who are the customers north of Joint Base  
23 Charleston? There's INEOS and who else?

24 A. So, yeah. Next up is Nexans which is brand new and been in  
25 there with four or five ships. They actually consulted with us

1    though about where would be a good place to set up a terminal, and  
2    we signed a NDA with them probably 3 years before they ever broke  
3    ground. And then there was another several years before they  
4    actually built a dock, but anyway, Nexans operates a cable  
5    manufacturing facility up at Bushy Park, and I mentioned, ships  
6    come in there and they extrude cable right onto the ship and two  
7    or three ships a year we bring up there. Those come in light and  
8    leave loaded, but the difference in draft is pretty limited. The  
9    maximum draft we can to Nexans is 25 feet, and that's because of a  
10   limitation in the natural depth of the river two turns up above  
11   INEOS. So there's another gate effectively that, you know, limits  
12   that.

13       Next up from that, it's only, I don't know, a mile and a half  
14   or so up above Nexans is the Nucor Steel Plant, and all the raw  
15   material coming into Nucor is offloaded at the Midstream Terminal  
16   and tugs and barges take it up there, their outbound products.  
17   Some of their outbound products is coils that comes out of there  
18   dock operated by Kinder Morgan and those are small breakbulk  
19   ships. Lately the class of ships going up or coming out of there  
20   I should say is 380 feet, and again, their maximum draft is 25  
21   feet just like Nexans.

22       Then the next facility up there we've operated out of is  
23   currently owned by W Engineering, and that's been very sporadic,  
24   usually tug and barge units coming out of there. The water  
25   filtration plants or water, you know, Water Missions was sending

1 some stuff out of there, but anyway, just one off cargos. Very  
2 rare, not even once a year.

3 So those are the four facilities that we've been in and out  
4 of. We've also been asked about the commercial viability of  
5 waterfront at the DuPont property which is several turns above W.  
6 And, our input to that is it would be tug and barge traffic only,  
7 probably maximum draft of 20 feet because again of the limitation  
8 of a couple of turns upriver. There's also some power lines up  
9 there that, you know, that the overhead clearance will probably  
10 ships out of there as much as anything. But anyway, that's being  
11 marketed as a potential waterfront commercial site and, you know,  
12 nothing's going on there yet.

13 Q. Okay. I think earlier you mentioned Buoy 72Alpha.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. So that was the temporary buoy that was put in after the *Bow*  
16 *Triumph*.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Can you explain like your involvement with that or what you  
19 know about the progress of that buoy?

20 A. Sure. So in late September of 2022, we submitted a letter to  
21 Sector Charleston, and I drafted that letter, and I don't remember  
22 whether I signed it or the president signed it, but anyway, it  
23 asked for the temporary establishment of a buoy marking the shoal  
24 roughly halfway between Buoy 73 and Marker 72, but on the red side  
25 for the purpose of, you know, providing a visual reference of the

1 edge of the channel there and the reason we asked for it to be  
2 temporary, we said it'll probably not be necessary, in that  
3 letter, after deepening is completed which we knew was pending  
4 there.

5 We revised that opinion in March of 2023 and sent a second  
6 letter saying we request that buoy be established permanently.  
7 I'm not sure what I was thinking in the first cycle but anyway,  
8 you know, by March we realized, wait a minute, the shoaling's  
9 always going to keep repeating and, you know, that buoy ought to  
10 just be temporary -- I mean permanent. It had been placed based  
11 on a request for the temporary marker for I think only a few  
12 weeks, and then the contractor or somebody asked the Coast Guard  
13 to remove it for the dredging that happened, you know, November,  
14 in that area.

15 And to my knowledge, it was never really established but I've  
16 been in regular contact with Chief Warrant Officer Ryan Brodie  
17 (ph.) at Sector Charleston as the ATON manager, and he's wonderful  
18 to work with. But anyway, you know, he said, yeah, we're going to  
19 get it permanently established. We have to go through the whole  
20 process, and it was posted in the Notice to Mariners that, you  
21 know, the Coast Guard is seeking to establish an aid and there's a  
22 comment period and that went from August to October of last year.  
23 And I believe that it was approved, you know, sometime after  
24 October and, you know, that's just what it takes to get a buoy  
25 established.

1 But anyway, my role on that was again collecting the input of  
2 the pilots, what would be beneficial to them and then going  
3 through the process to try to get it established in their behalf.

4 Q. Did the pilots provide any input for that process?

5 A. Sure. Yeah. I would have to believe that it was a topic of  
6 a director's meeting. You know, typically I don't, I don't just  
7 go off and write letters for things that I think would be good.  
8 You know, I make sure that, you know, the pilots that I work for  
9 are, you know, want me to go ahead and proceed. So, you know, I  
10 don't remember whose idea it was. Let's get buoy there, you know,  
11 I'm the guy that they look to, you know, to get it done.

12 Q. Okay. Were they like kept apprised of the status either  
13 through those meetings with them or them reading the LNM's  
14 themselves?

15 A. My weekly summaries of the LNM's, I kept, you know, recording  
16 on, you know, Buoy 72 is -- temporary authorization has been  
17 granted and it's in the water. It's out of the water. All that  
18 went in my weekly briefs that it's being proposed for permanent  
19 establishment. It's been approved. And that was the last  
20 reference I had sent out to them because that was the last  
21 substantive information on it and that was only a few weeks ago  
22 actually. Tomorrow, I will look forward to putting in my weekly  
23 brief that 72Alpha is on scene watching properly in the position  
24 where we requested it.

25 Q. Do you know if the Pilots Association ever requested like a

1 replacement, temporary buoy in that interim?

2 A. In discussion with Ryan Brodie, I know at some point I said,  
3 well, you know, can we get, can we get something in there to get  
4 it back in there and, you know, he said he's doing all he can but,  
5 no, we were waiting for the permanent establishment. I don't know  
6 why, and I really never thought that, you know, the process was  
7 broken, that that couldn't happen. You know, I was just kind of  
8 hopeful that any day now it'll get approved and it'll be there.  
9 So.

10 LT [REDACTED] Okay. I think that's all I have for now. Any  
11 follow ups?

12 MR. EHLERS: Yeah, I just a few follow ups.

13 BY MR. EHLERS:

14 Q. Just a little bit on PPU's and perhaps I should have asked  
15 Captain Logan this. You mentioned -- what's the company that  
16 provides the software?

17 A. The software's called SEAiQ.

18 Q. SEAiQ.

19 MR. CAMERON: Is that the name? Is that the name of the  
20 company, too?

21 CAPT LOGAN: I believe so, yeah.

22 MR. CAMERON: S-E-A-i-q.

23 BY MR. EHLERS:

24 Q. And it displays on an iPad?

25 A. Yes, I'm sure it displays on other platforms. I use it on a

1 laptop, and I just use it for administrative purposes. I actually  
2 use it on my own boat just so I can get more proficient at it and  
3 understand it better.

4 Q. Okay. The pilots use it in the wheelhouse on an iPad?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. What are the inputs to that PPU? In other words, the  
7 pilot plug in the wheelhouse, does it have separate GPS input? Do  
8 you know that information?

9 A. I only know what I've observed when I occasionally ride with  
10 pilots but amongst our group, there are two different pilot units  
11 that are used. One has its own GPS and AIS reception, and the  
12 other does not have AIS reception relies on the pilot plug. So,  
13 those units both, you know, they either collect the information  
14 from the pilot plug or through their own sensors, and communicate  
15 with the pilot units or by their iPads by WiFi, but the private  
16 closed WiFi network.

17 Q. Okay. And how is the sounding data displayed on that?

18 A. I can show you.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Here is -- and, you know, the reason I have a user account is  
21 so I can, you know, I'm the one posting the soundings. So here's  
22 -- every time, every time I download a sounding set from eHydro, I  
23 load it on my laptop and make sure it displays and it's really the  
24 set that it says it is. So that's the entrance channel. So  
25 that's what, you know, I don't know, Doug, you want -- you guys

1 want to see this, but anyway, that's, that's what it looks like on  
2 their iPads as well, and you can zoom in. You know, the more you  
3 zoom in, the more soundings you get.

4 Q. Okay.

5 CAPT LOGAN: Can I interject? We had to work with the Army  
6 Corps because sometimes we would get datasets that were just so  
7 dense that, if you think about if those numbers were in red, it  
8 would like a river of blood --

9 MR. EHLERS: Right, yeah.

10 CAPT LOGAN: -- and we worked with them to get it right and  
11 useable, frequency of soundings.

12 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right.

13 BY MR. EHLERS:

14 Q. Even that, in that picture it's pretty cluttered. Is -- can  
15 you toggle on and off the sounding data?

16 A. Real time, I would imagine that's fairly cumbersome to do  
17 while you're piloting the ship.

18 CAPT LOGAN: You can actually -- I think I showed you  
19 yesterday that it's a function of zooming in and out that reduces  
20 the clutter. So --

21 MR. EHLERS: I see.

22 CAPT LOGAN: -- so if you zoom out with greater area, it just  
23 turns the soundings off.

24 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Okay. All right.

25 CAPT LOGAN: It's pretty quick.



1 BY MR. EHLERS:

2 Q. All right. What do you do for soundings for the channel  
3 above Joint Base Charleston?

4 A. Yeah, we -- as I understand it, the pilots rely on their  
5 observations of the waterway and, you know, that's -- that  
6 waterway has been pretty stable. It's naturally -- it's a  
7 sufficient depth. So, you know, if you get through Range Delta,  
8 you're not going to have a problem as long as -- you're not going  
9 to have a problem in that upper part of the river, as long as  
10 you're, you know, you're in the fairway. But, here's what it  
11 displays like up there and, you know, even as you zoom in, you  
12 don't get more numbers because there aren't more numbers. But,  
13 you know, that's part --

14 Q. Do you know what the data source for that is? I mean is it  
15 the NOAA chart, the ENCs?

16 A. Yes. So somewhere on here --

17 Q. Yeah, I looked at the chart.

18 A. -- it might be 1950 for all you know.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Or whatever it is.

21 Q. So the sounding data above Joint Base Charleston is not  
22 regularly updated on PPU's?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But again my understanding is if you can get there and, you

1 know, you're not egregiously in the wrong part of the river, you  
2 know, you'll be fine and again, it's within the skill of the  
3 pilots to know where the, you know, the appropriate areas in the  
4 river are to be.

5 Q. Okay. You mentioned the -- you changed the limits for ship  
6 draft, 29 to 32, depending on conditions. What's that based on?  
7 In other words, what soundings or where does that come from? How  
8 do you base that decision?

9 A. So the Commissioner's policy for under keel clearance says,  
10 to strive for, the guidelines, it doesn't use the word try, but  
11 the guideline is 7 to 10 percent of the draft of the vessel for  
12 under keel clearance in the protected waters and it's 15 to 20  
13 percent offshore. So what does 7 to 10 percent mean? I interpret  
14 that on behalf of the pilots to mean that I'm going to look for 7  
15 percent where it's an individual feature that's probably not  
16 likely to induce squat, and I'm going to look for 10 percent where  
17 there's a more sustained shallow area where it might induce squat.  
18 And, when those -- I didn't include this in my description before  
19 but when there's a new set of soundings on eHydro, I also look at  
20 the color coded PDFs and I look for the shallow spots and they  
21 stand out much better because they're color coded, and I actually  
22 do that calculation. Okay. If we go over that with a ship at 30  
23 feet, am I getting the 7 percent that I want, am I getting the 10  
24 percent that I want. And if I notice that, then I'll go to the  
25 president and the directors and say, hey, this is looking a little

1 thin. It's not just there, you know, it's anywhere in the harbor,  
2 and I kind of know where the channel, the spots are that are going  
3 to be the interesting ones.

4 But sometimes I'm the one that initiates that but more often  
5 than not, it's the, you know, the pilots noticing with the under  
6 keel clearance of the depth sounder and, you know, I've never had  
7 somebody come to me and say, hey, I only have a foot and I'm  
8 supposed to have 3. I'd rather have them come to me and say, hey,  
9 I was seeing 6, 7, 8 feet and I'm only seeing 5 now, when 5 is  
10 still plenty, you know.

11 So my experience is that when the pilots initiate that, they  
12 tend to be pretty conservative. When I initiate it, I'm just  
13 doing it mathematically.

14 Q. Okay. So if I understood what you said, there's not a  
15 specific location that you picked out a reference point or is  
16 there? Or do you just look at the data?

17 A. This is the start of -- you know, when I'm -- when I get the  
18 Joint Base Charleston's soundings -- that's the same thing I'm  
19 showing you. I'm sorry. So that's Marker 73 and that's the  
20 narrow channel that goes into the turning basin, and usually I'm  
21 looking right around here. And, you see that 32.6 there --

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. -- and that 33.6, you know, you're going to be over on that  
24 side anyway.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I think those 31s and 32s, they are, you know, and this set  
2 was from May by the way. That's the most recent set. You know,  
3 that was looking okay then, but by July, from the pilots'  
4 experience, that wasn't good enough anymore to stay 32 feet.

5 Q. Okay. So typically --

6 A. Again, we're on high water by the way, when we're coming  
7 through here.

8 Q. So typically around Buoy 73 --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. -- and is that above? Where is that?

11 A. That is at the --

12 CAPT LOGAN: Between the subs and Alpha.

13 MR. CAMERON: So there's 73. There's where 72A is.

14 BY MR. EHLERS:

15 Q. Okay. So there's --

16 A. There's Wharf Alpha. There's Wharf Bravo.

17 Q. Okay. So that's based on Joint Base Charleston sounding  
18 data?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. All right. Is there any other place in the river that cue a  
23 change in draft, maximum draft?

24 A. I've looked at Range Charlie where sometimes it -- this was  
25 recently maintained. Again, back in May it was recently

1 maintained but, you know, what it encroaches on both sides, that's  
2 a straight fairway. So the ships aren't turning there, but  
3 anyway, I've looked to see if the shoals from both sides are  
4 starting to come together in the middle there and --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- that's never, that's never been the trigger. You know.  
7 Range D is always there. And by the way, I don't, I don't have  
8 any way to look for lateral interactions. I'm strictly looking at  
9 static under keel clearance.

10 Q. Understood.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Yeah. So, is it safe to say then that the Joint Base  
13 Charleston channel is typically the limiting function in draft,  
14 max draft?

15 A. To BP, absolutely, yes.

16 Q. Okay. All right. The ships going to BP, we've talked about  
17 this before, but I want to make sure I got it right. Of the  
18 terminals above Joint Base Charleston, the deepest draft vessels  
19 are the ones going to BP. Is that correct?

20 A. Yes. Yep. And basically, you know, we make it 42 -- 46 feet  
21 to here, 42 feet to here. That's the Midstream. 30 feet to BP  
22 which is here. 30 feet and that changes. It might be 29. And  
23 then above this turn, 25. So that's Nexans and this is Nucor and,  
24 you know, we've never had a call at W. We never had a call to be  
25 there at 20 feet -- 25 feet. So that's never been an issue.

1 Q. Okay. All right. Prior to the *Bow Triumph*, did you have any  
2 relationship with Joint Base Charleston like, you know,  
3 professional contact, regular meetings, anything like that with  
4 Joint Base Charleston?

5 A. Not regular meetings, but certainly interaction because  
6 there's another -- there's been another issue with them. There's  
7 the -- there's the subs right there.

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. And maybe I can put this up. I'm trying to find the -- they  
10 have a mooring buoy that --

11 CAPT LOGAN: Are you talking about the white mooring buoy --

12 A. Yeah, here it is. Right here. Yep. Right here. So, that  
13 mooring buoy is right on the edge of the channel, and it's lit  
14 now, right?

15 CAPT LOGAN: Yeah, I believe so.

16 MR. CAMERON: Yeah. So for a while it wasn't lit, and that  
17 was -- I was trying to get them to light it. I mean it just  
18 appeared there one day. Nobody told us it was coming. And then  
19 when they moor something to it, it's invariably in the channel.

20 MR. GILSENAN: That was the Navy?

21 MR. CAMERON: And they tend to like to do that during a  
22 hurricane. So invariably we'll be going up there with the ship  
23 that can get in after a hurricane, will come around the bend, and  
24 there's a dormitory barge anchored in the middle of channel  
25 stringing on that buoy. So, yes, we've had a lot of interaction

1 with them about that, and they seem, they seem to be more  
2 attentive to, you know, the needs of others.

3 BY MR. EHLERS:

4 Q. Yeah. And from our interviews yesterday, there's clearly an  
5 engineering section and operations section. For that kind of  
6 engagement, is that with they are, operations folks?

7 A. I still don't understand their organization. The people I  
8 spoke to about that buoy, I don't know if they're operations,  
9 they're engineering or how they are organizationally. You know,  
10 they're associated with the people we spoke with yesterday or  
11 anybody else up there. I don't know. It's like starting from  
12 scratch every time I need to call up there.

13 Q. Okay. All right. New topic. You talked about tugs and  
14 barges going up there and certain terminals, certain areas can  
15 only have tug and barge. Are those under pilotage?

16 A. The units that are taking the scrap from Midstream to Nucor  
17 are not under pilotage. Those are Jones Act voyages and they  
18 serve as their own pilot and, you know, their tonnage probably  
19 only requires them to have four trips, and they do their own  
20 pilotage. The only tugs and barges that we pilot through Joint  
21 Base Charleston are going to BP, and then the occasional one out  
22 of W, but again, that's not even annually.

23 Q. The ones that aren't under pilotage, are those ATPs or --

24 A. No. Ryan represents the company that does that. So they're  
25 (indiscernible).

1 MR. GILSENAN: Yeah, yeah, open barges on top of barges and  
2 push boats.

3 MR. EHLERS: Okay.

4 MR. CAMERON: And then there's other traffic up there for,  
5 you know, construction projects and whatnot. There's another  
6 company, K&B Marine that operates and tows up there, but usually  
7 it's supported project. It's no other cargo operations up there.

8 BY MR. EHLERS:

9 Q. All right. And then going up to BP, are those ATBs or both  
10 kind?

11 MR. CAMERON: We've only got ATBs there, right?

12 CAPT LOGAN: Yeah, it's ATBs.

13 MR. CAMERON: At least since --

14 CAPT LOGAN: Are you talking about ATBs versus ITBs?

15 MR. EHLERS: Really what I'm talking about is integrated or,  
16 you know,

17 LT [REDACTED]: The vessel --

18 MR. EHLERS: -- one with -- one with a wedge --

19 CAPT LOGAN: Right, right.

20 MR. EHLERS: Or are these just separate tugs, you know, just  
21 made up, you know.

22 MR. GILSENAN: The old style.

23 CAPT LOGAN: ATBs, right?

24 MR. EHLERS: Yeah.

25 MR. CAMERON: Yeah, right. Since ATBs were meant anyway.



1 BY MR. EHLERS:

2 Q. Okay. All right. You answered my question enough. That's  
3 fine. Last thing --

4 MR. GILSENAN: There are ships at Nucor Steel though for  
5 outbound.

6 MR. CAMERON: Yes, right.

7 MR. GILSENAN: They come in at ballast and load there.

8 MR. CAMERON: Right. I guess that -- they may have done  
9 export on barges once or twice.

10 MR. GILSENAN: Maybe, but I want to say ships do go there.  
11 One just sailed by here an hour ago.

12 MR. CAMERON: Yeah, ships do, right, but the question was  
13 barges. Do you ever remember taking anything on the water out of  
14 Nucor?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

16 MR. EHLERS: That's fine. Good enough.

17 BY MR. EHLERS:

18 Q. The -- back to Buoy 72Alpha. The letter in September of '22  
19 asking for the temporary buoy, it mentioned may not be necessary  
20 afterwards.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. After the dredging is done. And then in March, the letter  
23 said, hey, we want to make this permanent.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was the genesis or impetus for the change in assessment

1 in the March letter? Did something happen in March or was this  
2 just 5 months of feedback from the pilots or where did that change  
3 of assessment come from to say, hey, don't need it after the  
4 dredging is done to, you know what, it should be permanent?

5 A. Sure. Let me just find the letter, and maybe I explain that  
6 in the letter. It's to [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], a  
7 colleague of Lieutenant [REDACTED], another outstanding young Coast  
8 Guard officer who is the waterways manager for the Sector. March  
9 23rd. You know, looking back on it, I was kind of surprised, you  
10 know, to be reminded that I first asked for temporary and then  
11 switched later, and in hindsight, it should have been a temporary  
12 -- I mean it should have been a request for permanent all the way  
13 along. So here is that letter. March 29th, 2023.

14 Also concerns marking east edge of Range Delta across from  
15 Wharf Alpha at the Naval Weapons Station, the eastern shore, this  
16 reach has been unmarked and, at our request, your team installed  
17 72A on temporary authorization. This aid has been proven to be  
18 extremely effective aiding pilots to set up for the turn to Range  
19 C, and therefore we respectfully request that 72A be made a  
20 permanent authorization.

21 So my best guess is maybe we were trailing our way into it  
22 and it might have facilitated the Coast Guard's process to let's  
23 start with a temporary and then make sure it works and does what  
24 you want and then you can ask for a permanent.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. That's my best guess.

2 Q. At that point, at that point, had already been removed I  
3 believe.

4 A. That's right.

5 Q. The temporary buoy. Is that correct?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah, probably in October or November, and I can probably go  
9 back and find the Notice to Mariners about that.

10 Q. Okay. All right. Sorry. I do have two more questions for  
11 you. The next question may have probably been a better question  
12 for Captain Yarbrough but I'll ask it anyway. How are tugs  
13 charged? In other words, is it when they leave the dock and  
14 return to the dock? Is it when they get to the ship? And what  
15 I'm kind of getting at is, for instance, Captain Logan requested  
16 that a tug escort him down the river. Was the shipping company  
17 being billed for that tug anyway or how -- do you know how that  
18 works?

19 A. I've never read their tariff. You know, the simple logistics  
20 of that operation are tugs have to go up there to undock the ship  
21 and then they have to come back to the lower harbor because that's  
22 where all the rest of the work is. So they're transiting the same  
23 river at the same time. I don't know if, when a pilot says run  
24 alongside, that triggers an invoice or if that invoice is, you  
25 know, going to be sent any way because the tug is with the ship

1 anyway. And then whether the pilot, you know, all the -- I don't  
2 know.

3 Q. Okay. All right. And that's fair enough. We can ask -- I  
4 can ask that question somewhere else. Last question, does either  
5 the Association or the Commission have a post-accident review,  
6 formal post-accident review process? I know you mentioned that  
7 there's been a lot of review of the *Bow Triumph*. Was there a  
8 formal review of either the accident itself or the pilot's actions  
9 following an accident, any accident in Charleston Branch Pilots  
10 area of responsibility?

11 A. Yes, there's a whole chapter in the Commission's policy and  
12 procedures manual about accidents, investigations, disciplinary  
13 actions, and the Commission's response to the *Bow Triumph* was to  
14 gain party interest status. If so granted, monitor the  
15 investigation, report milestones to Commission which is a little  
16 challenging because, you know, the information that's developed in  
17 the investigative process can't be disseminated to the public but  
18 the meetings are public. So, you know, Commissioner Galloway was  
19 the Commission's representative and, you know, he has all that  
20 institutional knowledge of what the investigation has yielded so  
21 far. But, the Commission's response, wants to monitor the  
22 investigation and learn what we can from it or what they can from  
23 it.

24 Q. Okay. All right. And you mentioned -- so that's in the  
25 minutes of the Commission's meeting?

1 A. Sure. Yes, it's been on the agenda a handful of meetings.

2 MS. PAGE: Did we go into executive session?

3 MR. CAMERON: We might have at one point or another.

4 MS. PAGE: Okay. I think we did because it was public.

5 MR. EHLERS: Can you say that again, Amy?

6 MS. PAGE: I said I wasn't sure if we went into executive  
7 session and therefore it wouldn't be in the minutes.

8 MR. CAMERON: Right. What's discussed in executive session  
9 -- I know we've been in executive session since then, and that's  
10 the most likely reason why.

11 BY MR. EHLERS:

12 Q. What is executive session?

13 A. It means that it's a portion of the meeting that the public  
14 is not entitled to. However, the Commissioners can't take any  
15 action, you know, off the record.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. They can discuss but if there's any need for a motion or, you  
18 know, any action, they have to come out of executive session, go  
19 back on the record and the public is invited back in the room or  
20 on the phone.

21 Q. Okay. That's it. Thanks.

22 A. Okay.

23 LT [REDACTED]: Anything?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nope.

1 LT [REDACTED]: I don't think I have anything. That covers it.  
2 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF:        *HAFNIA AMESSI* TANKER ALLISION WITH  
PIER BRAVO ON THE COOPER RIVER,  
AT JOINT BASE CHARLESTON  
NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA,  
ON JANUARY 14, 2024  
Interview of John Cameron

ACCIDENT NO.:            DCA24FM018

PLACE:                    Charleston, South Carolina

DATE:                     January 17, 2024

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathryn A. Mirfin  
Transcriber