

From: [Vince Addington](#)
Subject: PORT UPDATE: Sacramento closed; Stockton restricted to daylight only - February 27 update - NO CHANGE
Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 1:32:18 PM
Attachments: [Sacramento River Update 27 Feb 2017.pdf](#)

GENERAL STEAMSHIP AGENCIES

TO: CHARTERERS OR VESSEL OPERATORS WITH CARGO INTERESTS AT THE PORT OF WEST SACRAMENTO OR STOCKTON

[For those reading on a smart phone, this message has **ONE** attachment with content.]

Greetings,

Yesterday, the San Francisco Bar Pilots issued the attached press release indicating that the high water conditions affecting the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers have not changed.

At this point, there is still concern that ships passing by critical levees in the Sacramento river may put them at risk of failure. "The San Francisco Bar Pilots have now been informed by engineers responsible for the levees that the levee system along both the Sacramento Deep Water Channel and the Stockton Deep Water Channel are under severe stress from the sustained high water levels and currents, and that any movement of ships through these waters will aggravate the risk to these levees."

As we reported last Thursday, ship transits to the Port of West Sacramento have been suspended until water levels recede to the point that passing ships do not pose a threat to the levee system.

Transits to the Port of Stockton remain restricted to daylight hours only. State officials are unable to estimate when the closure may be lifted but are closely monitoring the situation.

Best regards,

Vince Addington

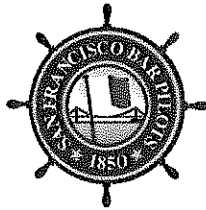
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SAN FRANCISCO BAR PILOTS

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February 27, 2017

Subject: Sacramento River Update

To whom it may concern

The following will provide a summary of actions taken by the San Francisco Bar Pilots in response to the recent abnormally high water and current conditions on the Sacramento River resulting from abnormally heavy rains and resulting run off, and releases from Lake Oroville and various other upstream reservoirs.

On February 21, 2017, the pilots informed ship agents and the Port of Sacramento of the abnormally high water and current conditions, and the pilots' concerns regarding possible damage to the levees. The pilots had been in contact with the Coast Guard Captain of the Port's staff and with the District Engineer responsible for the levees in Cache Slough, who also expressed concern over possible integrity loss in that area due to passing ships as the levees were completely saturated.

As a result of these high current conditions and the potential dangers to the levee system, the San Francisco Bar Pilots, along with the Sacramento Commissioned Pilots temporarily suspended piloting operations on the Sacramento River and the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel pending further evaluation of the conditions and possible risks to levee systems.

On February 22, 2017, the pilots provided the following update:

"Recent weather-related events have resulted in abnormally high water levels and abnormally strong currents in the Sacramento River and, to a lesser extent, the San Joaquin River. These conditions have impacted on the ability of the San Francisco Bar Pilots to safely move vessels bound to and from the Ports of Sacramento and Stockton. Initially, the primary impact on piloting was from the high currents. High tide tended to reduce the effect of those currents in critical areas such as Cache Slough where tidal flow created a back pressure against the out-flowing current coming out of Yolo Bypass.

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The San Francisco Bar Pilots have now been informed by engineers responsible for the levees that the levee system along both the Sacramento Deep Water Channel and the Stockton Deep Water Channel are under severe stress from the sustained high water levels and currents, and that any movement of ships through these waters will aggravate the risk to these levees. A levee breach could have catastrophic consequences, depending on the levee and the use of the land that would be flooded as a consequence of such a breach.

We are presently in communication with various federal, state and local agencies to determine who has jurisdiction and authority to make the determination of when the danger to the levees has sufficiently abated to permit normal resumption of vessel traffic. Once vessel traffic is permitted to resume from a levee-safety standpoint, we will reassess our ability to safely move vessels based on the currents and water levels. Given the recent storm systems and abnormal amounts of water released upstream to reduce the risks to reservoirs and dams, these conditions could continue for a substantial period of time.”

On February 23, 2017, the pilots received a copy of the Captain of the Port letter prohibiting the M/V IRIS SKY from proceeding eastward of the Sacramento Deep Water Shipping Channels Buoys 1 and 2 until a determination had been made regarding safe passage, but the order was subsequently lifted the following day.

In conference calls with several state and federal agencies on February 24 - 26, the pilots determined that concerns regarding the ability of the levee in the vicinity of Cache Slough to withstand the hydraulic forces of a passing ship had not been alleviated.

On February 26, 2017, the pilots responded to an inquiry from General Steam regarding the movement of the M/V IRIS SKY that the pilots were still working to resolve safety issues regarding the levees in Cache Slough; that levee engineers had raised concerns which had been echoed by officials at the State Dept. of Water Resources and the State Office of Emergency Services; and that the pilots had not yet received adequate assurance from the agencies responsible for levee integrity to make a transit to the port.

The section of the river that is currently of particular concern is a 3-mile stretch of the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel in the vicinity of Cache Slough, between Lights 41 and 51. The Yolo Bypass empties into the Ship Channel at the western end of Cache Slough, creating cross currents. At high tide, the water levels have been coming to within 2 to 3 feet of the top of the western levee.

Transiting at high tide tends to reduce the current coming out of Cache Slough and gives the pilot greater control, but the wake from the ship could exceed the height of the western levee. Additionally, the hydraulic forces created by the vessel's passage have raised concerns by

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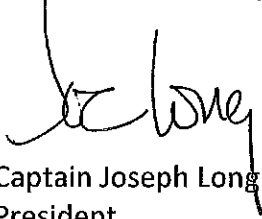
engineers and responsible state agencies regarding the levee's ability to withstand those forces.

The pilots have been informed by engineers responsible for the safety of the levees that the prolonged high water levels have placed the levees under considerable stress, and that the increased stress caused by a passing ship should be avoided until water levels have receded to a point that passing ships will no longer endanger the levees.

The pilots have an obligation under state law to protect the waters and surrounding ecosystems from damage caused by vessels that are required to secure pilotage services. The pilots have temporarily suspended piloting vessels through Cache Slough pending a determination by engineers responsible for the safety of the levees and cognizant government agencies whether such vessel traffic can be resumed without endangering the levees. As of today, February 27, 2017, that determination has not been made or communicated to the pilots.

Once that determination has been made and communicated to the pilots, the pilots will resume taking vessels through this area based on the usual navigational factors affecting the safe handling of the vessel, including vessel size and draft, its horsepower and handling characteristics, current and other river conditions, and daylight, visibility and other environmental conditions affecting shiphandling through a constricted waterway.

We will continue to provide further updates as further information is provided to us.



Captain Joseph Long
President