



11th October 2013

Mr. Garret Doocey
Administrative Officer
Maritime Transport Division
Department of Transport Tourism and Sport
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

National Ports Policy 2013

Dear Garret,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the recently published National Ports Policy.

Congress welcomes the broad thrust of the policy. The identification of the ports as part of the strategic infrastructure of the country and the policy of retaining them in public ownership is the correct policy. We also welcome the recognition in the policy that it is not possible to design a single policy framework into which all of the ports can easily fit therefore the classification of ports in three distinct categories is in the view of Congress is the correct approach.

Congress notes that one of the actions to be commenced in 2013 is to publish legislation to give effect to the decision to transfer the ownership of ports of regional significance to the relevant Local Authority. There are a number of issues that Congress would consider important in this context. Firstly we believe that the legislation should be clear on the issue of the impact on staff of any transfer of ownership. Staffs terms and conditions of employment including pension should be unaffected by the transfer of ownership. The legislation should include measures to protect the terms and conditions of staff employed in the ports of regional significance. Secondly we believe that the legislation should prescribe a single model of corporate governance for each of the ports of regional significance. We believe each of these ports should have a small board and each of these boards should have a member who has been elected by the staff. Thirdly we believe that prior to any transfer taking place an examination should be undertaken of the financial position of each of the ports and where necessary action be taken to put them on a sustainable financial footing.

Congress also notes that further consideration is to be given to the position of Waterford and Rosslare Ports and we would welcome the opportunity to comment on any proposals that may emerge in due course. We also note that further consideration is to be given to the position of ports in light of the recommendations of the soon to be published report of the Competition Authority Study which was commissioned by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. While the view of the Competition Authority deserves careful consideration any policy action to be taken on foot of its report should complement the policy position on ports which is articulated in the ports policy statement.

Finally Congress has been asked separately for its view on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation to establish a framework on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports. We understand that this regulation is now under active consideration. We have studied the proposed regulation and at this point we do not see any policy emerging that is likely to result in the requirement to fundamentally change the organisation of ports in the Republic of Ireland. We have asked the European Transport Federation to keep us up to speed on any emerging developments so we may wish to offer a further view as matters progress.

Yours sincerely



Liam Berney
Industrial Officer.

