



U. S. Department of Justice

Civil Division

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

September 1, 2000

Honorable Peter Morris
Chairman
International Commission on Shipping

Dear Chairman Morris:

Thank you for your letter to the Attorney General seeking advice and assistance on issues of international shipping and ship safety. The United States Department of Justice applauds the important work being done by your group, ICONS. Your letter was forwarded to me for response.

At the United States Department of Justice, litigation involving the federal government in shipping matters is handled by our Aviation and Admiralty section, a group of attorneys under my jurisdiction. That section includes attorneys who represent our views in the International Maritime Organization and the United States Maritime Law Association, and who work to ensure that the highest standards of maritime safety and environmental protection are employed and enforced in our courts. Our offices also represent in litigation the United States agency that enforces those maritime standards in U.S. waters, the United States Coast Guard. As the Coast Guard is the primary maritime enforcement agency for our government, we would defer to its input on the subjects you have raised in your correspondence. In addition, I note that a senior legal advisor at our sister agency, the United States Department of State, has submitted a pair of papers discussing the current state of the law regarding Flag State implementation of quality controls in shipping. These are thoughtful and thorough pieces that warrant further discussion. If our Admiralty staff develops any additional materials relevant to your group's concerns, we will forward them for your consideration.

To the extent that they can offer insight into United States federal court litigation processes, the staff of our Admiralty group would be happy to meet with your staff during your hearings here in Washington. The Assistant Director in charge of the Admiralty group is Mr. David V. Hutchinson. He can be reached at (202) 616-4126.

I hope that this information is of some assistance to you and the Commission in your present inquiry. Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. W. Ogden".

David W. Ogden

Assistant Attorney General