



News Release

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For Immediate Release

NCBFAA Urges FMC to Accept VGM Process Agreement

Washington, DC: In a [letter to the Federal Maritime Commission \(FMC\)](#), National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association, Inc. (NCBFAA) General Counsel Edward Greenberg urged acceptance of an agreement between the Ocean Carrier Equipment Management Association (OCEMA) and six major East and Gulf coast ports to establish a process for transmitting Verified Gross Mass (VGM) data to the carriers prior to loading export cargo from the United States.

The VGM Guidelines prohibit loading a packed container onto a ship unless shippers provide a certified VGM as determined by either weighing the packed container or weighing what's packed in the container and adding that to the tare weight of the container. To determine the tare weight, the shipper would have to weigh the container or rely on the carrier for the weight.

Under the proposed agreement, "marine terminals would weigh a container on certified terminal scales and that weight could then be used to fulfill the VGM requirement and develop the necessary stow plans without requiring any additional certifications from shippers."

This approach makes marine terminals responsible for a container's certified tare weight and "would alleviate shippers' concern relating to certifying information pertinent to the equipment they do not own, avoid the need for exporters and NVOCCs to perform redundant weighing procedures and, hopefully, eliminate the need for those parties to pay additional costs that may otherwise be associated with literal adherence to the VGM Guidelines."

Mr. Greenberg pointed out that this new process could address a series of concerns that exporters have been raising since the VGM Guidelines were made public in the United States. Among these are associated cost and logistical burdens, lack of implementation uniformity, and the requirement that shippers provide the certified weight of equipment that they neither own nor control.

While indicating its support, the NCBFAA called on the FMC "to make it clear that its acceptance of the Agreement not be interpreted as giving its imprimatur to the controversial VGM Guidelines or any conclusion that the carriers' insistence on literal compliance is consistent with or lawful under the Shipping Act."

"The NCBFAA also requests that the Commission make clear that any authority under the Agreement does not include the right of either," the letter noted, "the carriers, ports or marine terminal operators to collectively establish any charges for weighing containers or transmitting the certified weights on to the carriers that can be passed on to shippers or NVOCCs in their capacity as

shippers.”

Headquartered in Washington, DC, the NCBFAA represents more than 1,000 member companies with 110,000 employees in international trade - the nation's leading freight forwarders, customs brokers, ocean transportation intermediaries (OTIs), NVOCCs and air cargo agents, serving more than 250,000 importers and exporters. Established in 1897 in New York, NCBFAA is the effective national voice of the industry. Through its various committees, counsel and representatives, the Association maintains a close watch over legislative and regulatory issues that affect its members. It keeps them informed of these and other related issues through its weekly Monday Morning eBriefing, and various meetings and conferences throughout the year.

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