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### **Study Finds No Scientific Data to Support Work Hour Changes for Towing Vessel Crewmembers**

ARLINGTON, VA – The American Waterways Operators, the national trade association for the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, hailed a [study](#) conducted for the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine which concludes that “[t]here is currently no scientific data to support [...] a change in hours of service” for towing vessel crewmembers. The study’s authors reviewed several recent studies suggesting that when sleep is split into more than one period per day, as in the square watch system in use on many towing vessels, “performance is comparable, and in some cases, better than when the same duration of sleep is obtained in a single sleep period.”

Instead of regulatory changes to hours of service, which “are not likely to be the most effective way to increase sleep durations and improve sleep quality,” the TRB study presents a suite of “evidence-based best practices to improve sleep on schedules requiring a split-sleep period.” The study recommends that these best practices be linked together by a fatigue risk management system developed as part of a towing vessel’s safety management system.

“The TRB study is the latest contribution to a growing body of scientific research in multiple transportation modes that demonstrates that splitting sleep into two periods can be a safe and effective way to manage fatigue in 24/7 operating environments like the tugboat, towboat and barge industry,” said Jennifer Carpenter, AWO Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Ms. Carpenter continued, “AWO and its members have been working with the Coast Guard to prevent and manage fatigue risks in our industry for nearly two decades. We look forward to working with the Coast Guard and our other government partners to incorporate the TRB study recommendations into our ongoing efforts to ensure that towing vessel crewmembers consistently obtain the quantity and quality of sleep they need to do their jobs safely and to optimize crewmembers’ sleep and endurance within existing industry watch schedules.”

#### **About the American Waterways Operators**

*The American Waterways Operators* is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which operates on the rivers, the Great Lakes, and along the coasts and in the harbors of the United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, please visit [www.americanwaterways.com](http://www.americanwaterways.com).