



801 North Quincy Street
Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22203

PHONE: 703.841.9300
EMAIL: jcarpenter@americanwaterways.com

Jennifer A. Carpenter
President & CEO

September 3, 2020

Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus
National Academy of Medicine
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
500 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of The American Waterways Operators (AWO), the national trade association for the U.S. tugboat, towboat and barge industry, thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicines' *Discussion Draft of the Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine*.

The importance of our industry, and the maritime industry as a whole, to the national supply chain cannot be overstated. Our member companies' ability to continue to move critical commodities on our waterways and provide essential shipdocking, tanker escort and bunkering services in our ports and harbors will directly bear on our national economy's ability to weather this global crisis. The paramount importance of maintaining the health and safety of mariners and other front-line maritime sector workers to support the resilience of the national supply chain underscores the need to ensure they are considered critical risk workers who are included in Phase 2 of COVID-19 vaccine allocation.

We believe it would be reasonable for policymakers implementing the framework to conclude that mariners, port and facility workers, and other front-line maritime sector workers are in an industry essential to the functioning of society, are at substantially high risk of exposure, and should therefore be included in Phase 2. However, we are concerned that it contains no specific reference to the maritime industry, while citing other modes of transportation such as "buses, trains, and planes" (page 67, line 1506). In the interest of ensuring that policymakers are equipped with the comprehensive context of the importance of the uninterrupted flow of critical commerce throughout the entire U.S. transportation system, we respectfully request that the framework explicitly mention the maritime sector alongside the other vital transportation modes mentioned in the discussion draft.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer A. Carpenter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jennifer A. Carpenter
President & CEO