

Sailors' Union  *of the Pacific*

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February 14, 2021

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002 Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Merchant Mariner Vaccinations

Dear Governor Inslee,

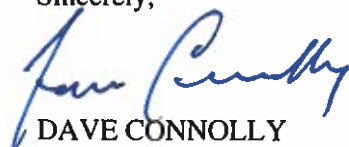
On behalf of merchant mariners living and working in Washington ports, I request your intervention to order their immediate access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Mariners are exposed every day on the dangerous frontlines, moving ships and cargo to deliver the food, energy, and medical supplies so fundamental to health of the state and the nation.

Federal authorities would not argue with such action. Many agency experts recognized the early priority of merchant mariners due the logistical keystone nature of their work. As two members of the Federal Maritime Commission recently advised President Biden “Our society has adapted to dramatic changes...” but “what remains unchanged is the essential need of cargo to move through our ports. The sacrifices, resilience, and selflessness of those who work in the maritime industry have kept our supply chain functioning and our economy connected” and will serve as a foundation for the 2021 recovery. “For this to happen, we must provide immediate vaccination to the maritime workforce,” so said Carl Bentzel and Daniel Maffei.

Mariners are easily identified by merchant mariner credentials, accustomed to inoculations, and vaccinating them would cost little in effort or vaccine. And since their importance far outweighs their numbers a profound and immediate impact on the public safety would result.

We faithfully await our turn despite our heightened risks while restricted aboard ship, but you alone have both the authority and responsibility to make an immediate and vast improvement to the safety of mariners and the entire supply chain they service. We were encouraged that longshoremen were recently re-prioritized for vaccine in some states. Remember that the maritime workforce does not stop on the docks but also travels on the waters. We look forward to your response and stand ready to assist in vaccine program promulgation and practical implementation.

Sincerely,



DAVE CONNOLLY
President/Secretary-Treasurer