



SAN FRANCISCO BAR PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Pier 9 East End
San Francisco, CA 94111

April 8, 2024

To: USCG District 11 Prevention Division Waterways

Subject: Oakland Outer Harbor Range Lights (USCG Light List Aids 4610, 4615, 4617, 4618, 4620, 4625)

Please accept this letter of concern regarding the deterioration of the approach ranges in Oakland Outer Harbor. The San Francisco Bar Pilots urgently request the USCG repair these Aids to Navigation at soonest.

Background: The ranges in the Oakland Outer Harbor (OOH) are vital to the safe navigation of commercial vessels calling in OOH. These ranges, the center range in particular, are critical in maneuvering ships from the Oakland Bar Channel into Oakland Outer Harbor. A pilot's ability to navigate safely into the entrance channel and past ships at the Evergreen Terminal is predicated on visual, real time, information that the ranges provide. The nature of the navigation in this approach is predominately visual. Electronic charts/PPUs or virtual aids can support position determination but are not a substitute for the visual cues necessary for a pilot to make real time maneuvering decisions in this area.

The Center Range (yellow) marks the center of the channel. The location of the upper light tells the pilot if they are right or left of center. The A and B Ranges mark the edges of the channel where the ship can be safely maneuvered. The A Range (green) rear light structure has fallen over. The B Range (red) has the front day board missing. SFBP understands that the A structure cannot be fixed because it is condemned. We can only assume that the other structures are in the same condition as the A Range. Without lights and day boards, it becomes increasingly difficult to safely navigate in this area, particularly at night. The currents run nearly 90 degrees across the opening of the very narrow entrance channel, so it is critical to immediately judge the vessel set in order to remain in safe water.

Oakland Outer Harbor is a busy commercial port and a critical driver of the State's economy. Last year the Port of Oakland had 303 vessel calls in OOH and 2024 is on track for 330. OOH represents about 40% of the Port's container vessel traffic. To keep commerce flowing safely and efficiently, it's imperative that the Oakland Outer Harbor Ranges be maintained and repaired.

Respectfully,

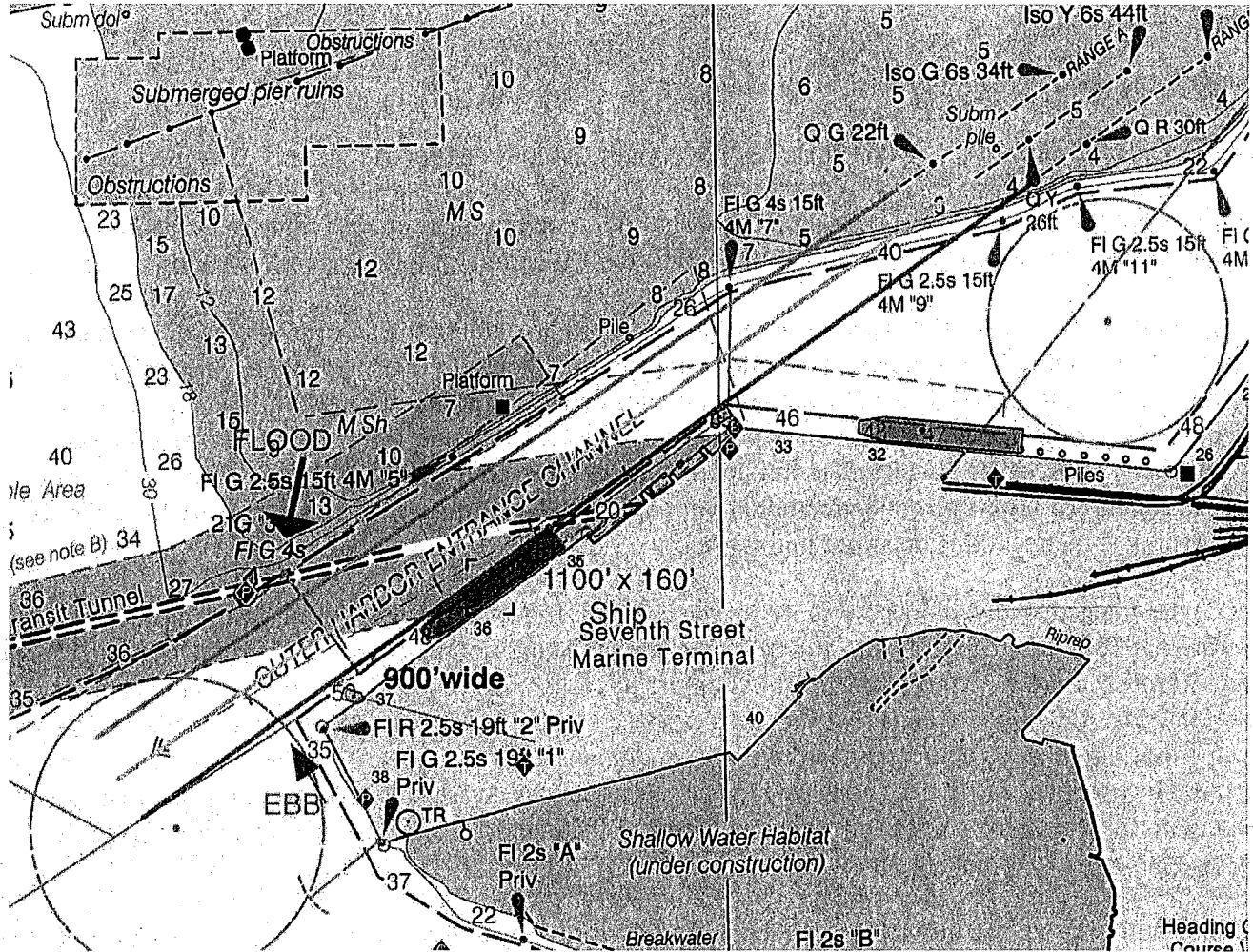
John Carlier

Capt. John Carlier
Port Agent

cc: Mr. Scott Humphrey, Chair SFHSC
Mr. Bryan Brandes, Maritime Director, Port of Oakland
Capt. Paul Ruff, SFHSC Navigation Work Group

Chart View of Ranges

Note current direction, ships alongside and shallow water on north side of channel



Pictures of Visual Approach

